



ISSUE FIFTY-THREE

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IN-VISION

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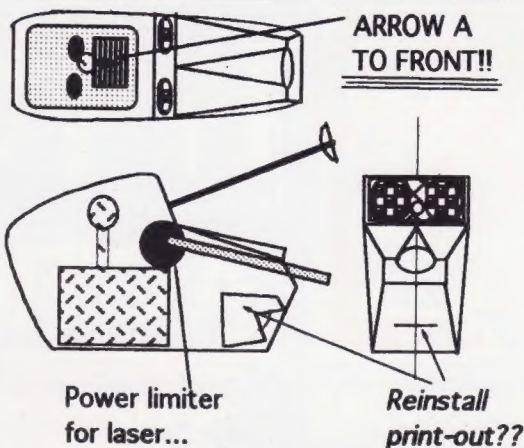
United Kingdom

THE DOCTOR'S mischievous grin gradually faded from his face, and he began to open the large packing case he had just dragged into the console room from the depths of the TARDIS.

He'd been taken aback that K9 had elected to stay on Gallifrey with Leela, but the automaton's faultless logic was proved yet again by the action: K9's duty was to protect his master and mistress, but if they were in two different places, he would have to choose between them. The Doctor was perfectly capable of looking after himself, but Leela, for all her resourcefulness, was stuck on a planet where she was a complete outsider, even with Andred's support and...love? K9 would hardly be able to take such an illogical concept into account.

But then again, mused the Doctor, perhaps the old thing knew more than the Doctor realised — that he had gone that one step beyond ensuring he always had a full set of spare parts for K9, to actually building a complete facsimile. Of course, not wishing to hurt the poor thing's feelings, make him think he was replaceable, the Doctor had kept K9 Mark II in its — his? — component parts until such time as he was needed. After all, how would he feel if his replacement started wandering about before he'd finished with his present body? Nervous, that's how.

Donning his work-apron, the Doctor laid out the sections of his new companion on the floor, searching around for the notes on construction he had made as he went along. Finding them, he frowned deeply. What shocking handwriting... As he set to work, the Doctor began wondering how Leela would be getting along. He had often rebuked himself that he never went back to see how his old companions were getting along. Some he just hoped were happy in their new lives — Vicki, Steven, Victoria. Yet could he be complacent about the others? How had Ian and Barbara coped with explaining a two-year gap in their lives? Dodo had virtually had a nervous breakdown, but he'd all but forgotten her. Ben and Polly would be fine, they were survivors. Jamie and Zoe had been returned to their own times, but with their memories doctored, to who knew what effect. And then...Liz, Jo, each had their paths to follow. Harry had slipped bluffly back into his old life. And Sarah Jane? The Doctor smiled to himself. Now she had given him a run for his money, that one. And what had he done? Run off to Gallifrey, plonking her down in South Croydon — at least, he thought it was South Croydon... Rather rude of him, however much he hated goodbyes. He felt strangely more



guilty about Sarah, perhaps because it was a relatively recent event... It nagged at him, as with the logic solids containing the back-up of the original K9's memory (not quite up-to-date, but it would do...) installed he finally screwed the top of K9 Mark II's head on, and stood up to admire his creation.

"K9?" he said. There was no response, and the Doctor realised with an embarrassed cough that there was one last thing to do. Switch him on... With a low, rising hum, K9's eye panel illuminated, and he croaked, "Master?"

"Hello K9..." The Doctor grinned in self-satisfaction, and started to remove his work-apron, making to hang it on the coat-stand. He stopped, and thought of Sarah again. He ought to do something to make amends to her, at least, a way of helping her out of any future difficulties she found herself in. The first one had been relatively easy, and making another would be good practice for him. Who knows, he might even think of a few more improvements — there were still some teething troubles with the traction unit...

"K9," the Doctor said, sheepishly, "I know it's a little early, I mean you've just got here, as it were, although it wouldn't be for long, just until I dropped it off, but..."

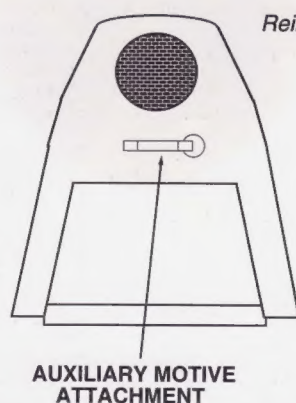
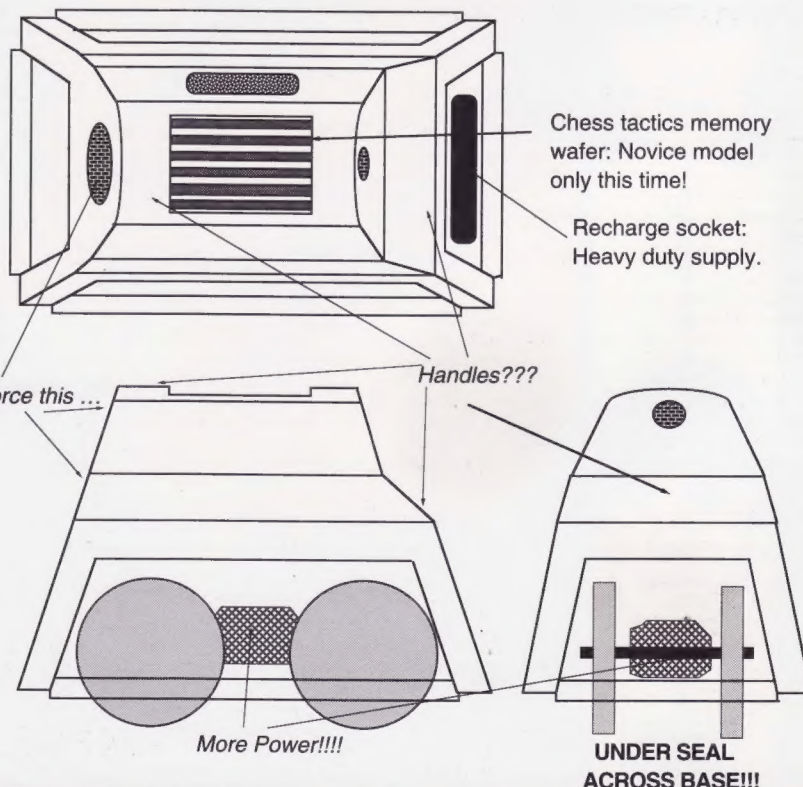
"Master?"

"How would you like to have a little brother?"

Andrew Martin

**H.9**

**SIRIUS CYBERNETICS CORPORATION**  
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Professor Egard Marius - 25/8/5998  
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Since **SARAH JANE SMITH** left the Doctor, she appears to have acquired a very cosmopolitan lifestyle. Dashing about here and there, sipping white wine in sophisticated locations, and speeding around in her open topped car. She's also taken up jogging.

Her work has taken her to many places, and as her Aunt Lavinia remarks, Sarah Jane remains "like a butterfly, never in one place long enough to lick a stamp." Of course, Lavinia's own globe-trotting is the likely cause of her niece's growth into such an independent and self-reliant young woman.

Sarah comes to Moreton Harwood to find peace and quiet, but Aunt Lavinia's early departure immediately triggers her journalistic instincts. She also seems rather put out at being left in charge of Brendan, Lavinia's ward. As she points out, "I'm here to write a book, not be a surrogate mum."

Sarah is surprised and then touched to find **K9** and hear his message from the Doctor, realising that he hadn't forgotten her after all — though at first it seems as though she's been trying her level best to do just that. Deep down, Sarah seems to have changed little in the years since she left the Doctor. She's still adaptable, inquisitive and self-reliant, all qualities she puts to use in solving the mystery of Moreton Harwood...

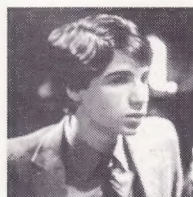


**K9 MARK III** was built by the Doctor as a gift for Sarah Jane (the first, and so far as we know, the last of the Doctor's companions to receive such a gift), and was delivered crated-up to Aunt Lavinia's Croydon house in 1978 where, due to Sarah's long absences, he remained for several years. Disinterred at Moreton Harwood, Lavinia determined to ensure that this mysterious box was at last opened.

It was **K9's** responsibility to deliver a message from the Doctor: "Give Sarah Jane Smith my fondest love. Tell her I will remember her always." It is not stated when the Doctor built this **K9**, but it seems likely he was still in his fourth incarnation, as none of the later Doctors bothered to build another replacement.

Like his predecessors, **K9** is incredibly literal and prone to awful puns. When Brendan asks "Who is the Doctor?" he replies "Affirmative." Unlike them however he seems to have been constructed from twentieth century technology, as he confirms Brendan's guesses as to his components. Perhaps he was simply programmed to lie when asked about his design — perhaps Sarah got a substandard version... Certainly, though very advanced, **K9** is far from infallible, and odd gaps in his experience cause trouble in his pursuit of George Tracey.

**K9** seems to direct his attentions towards Brendan at first, but is clearly programmed to recognise Sarah Jane as his mistress: a girl's best friend through and through.



**BRENDAN RICHARDS** is Aunt Lavinia's ward, though no mention is made of the fate of his parents — they may just be travelling abroad. In the **K9** annual he is said to be Sarah's nephew, but this seems unlikely as is no evidence to suggest she had any siblings.

He is obviously eager to be away from Wellington, his boarding school, and back at home — if it is home, as he seems to know none of Lavinia's neighbours. Nor does he know Sarah Jane, though he doesn't hesitate to take advantage of her hospitality.

Brendan's life seems dominated by an interest in science, (though

this may be a sudden enthusiasm, as he has only just decided to take additional maths, physics and chemistry as extra subjects), and he shows a detailed knowledge of advanced electronics, which he applies to **K9**. He's that sort of young man — a scientific wunderkind, and like his equivalent, Adric, Brendan has his annoying traits — a schoolboy grasp of humour and a honking laugh like the opening of a rusty ironing board.

He seems rather gullible, but if he does manage to transfer to the local comprehensive, a closer association with Lavinia, Sarah and **K9** could only help to broaden his horizons. After all, given Sarah's record, he'd be sure to gain experience in how to cope with abductions, disappearances and potential sacrifices!

**COMMANDER BILL POLLOCK** is an ex-Naval Officer, and Aunt Lavinia's partner in the market garden business. When Sarah first arrives he, and his dog Jasper, make their presence well felt. On reflection it seems likely that he was keeping tabs on her from the very beginning. Patronising and arrogant, he seems more at home in Lavinia's house than does Sarah, appearing uninvited in a way which soon convinces her that he was Lavinia's trusted confidant.

A very clever man, apparently respected by the community, he comes across as disinterested in everything but money and his dog — yet all along he is toying with Sarah.

His business is failing, and from his attempts to blame the weather it's clear that he sees the control over the elements offered by his beliefs as the route to his salvation. Perhaps it's these troubles which lead him to seek the extra power available from a *human* sacrifice. Yet ultimately he causes his own downfall — had he told Sarah the truth, that her aunt had left early for her American tour, Sarah might never have investigated the problem at all...



**DOCTOR LAVINIA SMITH** is every bit as curious and tenacious as her journalist niece. A renowned scientist in the field of virology since the nineteen fifties, her most famous paper (on the teleological responses of the virus) was deemed "a most impressive piece of work" by the third Doctor. Particularly if, as the novelisation states, she was principally an anthropologist!

As a scientist, she has a deep rooted antipathy to superstition, and has annoyed a lot of people by criticising local occult activity in the Standard. But she refuses to let herself be driven from her home, instead accepting a lecture tour in the States.

This seems to be an important part of her life, as she was touring America when the United Nations Intelligence Taskforce tried to take her under their protection some years ago, and has an American agent and a good relationship with the Cornell University Press.

It is possible though that her career is on the wane: when Juno Baker remarks that Lavinia "was a celebrity", Sarah's snappy response would seem to suggest that there was more than a little truth in this. This would explain why Lavinia has begun to take an interest in the loss-making market garden business she inherited from her husband, reading up on the subject.

Although Sarah is now a transient part of her life, the two women remain very close, and Lavinia has clearly been the dominant influence on her niece's life. This, at least, bodes well for Brendan's future...



# Elisabeth Sladen

(This listing updates that printed in In-Vision issue 17).

## Biographical

Born, Liverpool, 1-2-1948; parents lived in Penny Lane.  
Grammar School in Liverpool (6 O-Levels); then a drama and dancing course in Liverpool (2 years)  
1959: worked with Royal Ballet.  
Worked as Assistant Stage Manager, Liverpool Playhouse.  
1966: First professional performance, Liverpool Playhouse.  
c.1968: Married Brian Miller.  
1972: Moved to London  
1972: Second choice for the role of Betty in **Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em**.  
Late 1977: Moved to Ealing.  
March 1985: Daughter, Sadie, born (by Caesarean section), Queen Charlotte's Hospital: baby appeared in a video being made about babies there.

## Stage

1966: [Dead Body] in *The Physicists*; Liverpool Playhouse [first stage role].  
St Helens Rep.  
1966: Ashton Theatre, St Anne's; 2 months.  
Malvern Rep.  
Farnham Rep.  
Manchester rep.  
Two seasons at the Theatre in the Round, Scarborough, including in 1969: *The Story So Far*, dir. Alan Ayckbourne. [Photo in *The Stage* and in M. Billington, *Alan Ayckbourne*].  
Mary Warren in *The Crucible*.  
Desdemona in *Othello*

*The Philanthropist*; Mayfair Theatre.

1977: *Saturday, Sunday, Monday*; Liverpool Playhouse.

1977: *The Lion in Winter*; Liverpool Playhouse.

*Bedroom Farce*; tour.

late 70s: Olivia in *Twelfth Night*; Bristol.

## Film

1980: Bank Secretary in *Silver Dream Racer*; dir. David Wickes.

## Television

### a) Acting Parts

16-2-68: Hotel Maid in **Playhouse**: IF ONLY THE TRAINS CAME; Granada; dir. Barry Davis.  
5-1-70 — 21-1-70: Anita Reynolds in **Coronation Street**: 6 eps.; Granada; exec. prod. H.V. Kershaw.

**Special Branch**; Thames.

15-11-71 — 16-1-71: Valerie in **Z-Cars**: WHO WERE YOU WITH?; 2 eps.; BBC;

dir. Derek Martinus. [Photo in Radio Times].

19-6-72: Sarah in **Doomwatch**: SAY KNIFE, FAT MAN; BBC; dir. Eric Hills.

29-11-72: Policewoman in **Public Eye**: MANY A SLIP; Thames; dir. David Wickes. [TV Times credits 'Elisabeth Slade']

15-3-73: Julie in **Some Mothers Do 'Ave 'Em**, season one, ep. 5 ("The Hospital Visit"); BBC; prod. Michael Mills.

29-10-73: **Z-Cars**: NUISANCE; BBC; dir. Julia Smith.

15-12-73 — 8-6-73: Sarah Jane Smith in **Doctor Who**, season 11; BBC; regular, 26

eps.; prod. Barry Letts.

28-12-74 — 10-5-75: Sarah Jane Smith in **Doctor Who**, season 12; BBC; regular, 20

eps.; prods. Barry Letts, Philip Hinchcliffe.

30-8-85 — 6-3-76: Sarah Jane Smith in **Doctor Who**, season 13; BBC; regular, 26

eps.; prod. Philip Hinchcliffe.

4-9-76 — 23-10-76: Sarah Jane Smith in **Doctor Who**, season 14; BBC; regular, 8

eps. of 26; prod. Philip Hinchcliffe.

29-3-78: Beverley in **Send in the Girls**:

BEWARE THE GENTLE PEOPLE; Granada; dir.

Oliver Horsburgh.

23-9-78: Countess Bertrand in **Saturday**

**Drama**: BETZ; Anglia; dir. Claude Whatham.

17-1-79 — 7-3-79: Josie in **Take My Wife**;

Granada; prod. John G. Temple. (She is

'charmingly exploiting her training as second-

in-command' [i.e. in **Doctor Who**];

Jennifer Lovelace, *The Stage*, 25-1-79.)

16-12-80: Jo in **Play for Today**: NAME FOR

THE DAY; BBC; dir. Bill Bain.

28-12-81: Sarah Jane Smith in **K9 and**

**Company**: A GIRL'S BEST FRIEND; BBC; dir.

John Black.

3-1-82 — 24-1-82: Lady Flimnap in **Gulliver**

in **Lilliput**; BBC; 4 eps.; dir. Barry Letts.

25-11-83: Sarah Jane Smith in **Doctor**

**Who**: THE FIVE DOCTORS; BBC; dir. Peter

Moffatt.

13-9-85: Mrs Barrett in **Dempsey and**

**Makepeace**: LOVE YOU TO DEATH; Golden

Eagle Films/LWT; dir. Tony Wharmby.

19-1-86 — 26-1-86: The Dormouse in **Alice**

in **Wonderland**, eps 3-4; BBC; dir. Barry

Letts.

19-1-89: Mrs Preston in **The Bill**: LIFE AND

DEATH; Thames.

??-??-94: **Men of the World**; BBC; dir.

Terry Kinane.

## b) Presentation

9-5-77: **Merry-Go-Round**: THE FUEL FISH-ERS; BBC Schools.

1977: **Merry-Go-Round**: THE JUBILEE; BBC

Schools; prod. Brian Jamson.

1977-78: **Stepping Stones**: YTV.

14-1-80: **My World**: ITV Schools. [Photo in

TV Times, w/e 8-5-81]

## Adverts

Cross and Blackwell.

Vosene.

Daily Mail [with Ian Marter, as husband and

wife].

Various in Holland, Spain, Eire.

**Radio** [BBC London, except where stated]

3-7-76: Dorothy in **Thirty Minute Theatre**:

POST MORTEM: BBC Manchester; dir. Robert

Cooper [with Brian Miller].

4-10-76: Sarah Jane Smith in **Exploration**

**Earth**: THE TIME MACHINE.

15-10-76: Brenda in **Afternoon Theatre**: A

BITTER ALMOND; BBC Manchester; dir. Tony

Cliff. [w. Brian Miller]

1977: **Laura and the Angel**: BBC.

27-8-93 — 24-9-93: Sarah Jane Smith in

**Doctor Who**: THE PARADISE OF DEATH; prod.

Phil Clarke.

31-3-94: Lady Mary in **Sir Colin's New**

**Clothes**; dir. Matthew Walters. (w. Brian

Miller)

## Other Performances

1976: Sarah Jane Smith in **Doctor Who**

and the **Pescatons**; Argo Records.

## Personal Appearances

9-3-75: **Wogan's World**; BBC Radio.

13-5-76: **Nationwide**; BBC tv. (Interview

re. her departure from **Doctor Who**.)

4-9-76: **The Multicoloured Swap Shop**:

BBC tv. (Interview re. **Doctor Who** with

Tom Baker.)

22-11-85: **Children in Need**: BBC tv.



**ORIGINS:** John Nathan-Turner had survived his first year as Producer of *Doctor Who*. Considering he had started in 1980 with no resident Script-Editor, no formal experience in producing and with just a handful of mostly only half-written scripts "in the cupboard", this was quite an accomplishment.

In the twelve months following his appointment he had successfully negotiated an additional two episodes for the season, brought the entire year in more or less to budget, transformed completely the resident cast, promoted the show widely through a constant barrage of publicity, encouraged new merchandise opportunities, and steered the series from a near ratings disaster at the beginning to respectable figures by the time of Tom Baker's departure.

Far more of a publicist than any of his predecessors, John Nathan-Turner actively believed in courting both the viewing public — via the media — and the fans, correspondingly raising his own profile and status alongside that of the series. In a year that had realistically ended on a high note for him, there were only two significant down aspects.

The decision by Christopher Bidmead to resign as Script-Editor would leave a gap that would be difficult to fill in the short-term due to the lack, initially, of suitable candidates. Although Executive Producer Barry Letts had been highly critical of the strategy behind many of the scripts and script ideas solicited for the series, there was no criticism directed personally at Bidmead, whom everyone recognised had worked phenomenally hard pulling the season together, and ensuring there was a bank of workable material "in the cupboard" that would at least guarantee a successor a good start to the 1981 production year.

The other downbeat subject was the adverse Press and public feedback Nathan-Turner's had generated. Although adamant he had done the right thing for *Doctor Who*, the vast number of letters to the office, plus the various "Save K9" campaigns mounted by some newspapers and book publishers, had surprised him with their volume and their intensity. Removing K9 had been an unpopular move, and unpopularity was not an attribute this Producer welcomed.

Although the actual date of inspiration is not known, the notion of a spin-off series featuring K9 was leaked to the fan network as early as January 1981. By this time the Producer would have had meetings with Shaun Sutton, the Drama Head, and Graeme MacDonald, the Head of Series and Serials, to gain approval for the 1981/82 *Doctor Who* production year.

The application was a bold one. As well as the regular series, which he hoped would be a further 28 weeks, John Nathan-Turner asked for permission for the Production Office to handle an additional ninety-minute TV movie featuring K9 which, if successful, would lead to six more fifty minute dramas to be commissioned for the 1982/83 year.

MacDonald was a supporter of *Doctor Who*, quoting it as a bedrock part of the BBC's schedule. He was also aware of political moves at sixth floor level to shift the next season of *Doctor Who* away from its traditional Saturday evening slot. Both he and Shaun Sutton opposed this, but as, firstly, they could be over-ruled by the Head of BBC1, and secondly, both men were due to retire early in 1981, MacDonald realised it was a battle he could not win. Convinced then by Nathan-Turner's arguments, and perceiving a possible need to bolster support for *Doctor Who*, he approved the commissioning of a K9 storyline and the allocation of a slot to make it.

Aware that this might cause resentment from other departments bidding for slots, MacDonald told Nathan-Turner he could only do a 26-week season of *Doctor Who*, not 28, and that, aside from the annual inflationary increase, there would be no extra money on the table. The K9 movie would have to be afforded from the standard *Doctor Who* yearly budget.

**SCRIPT:** Terence Dudley was almost an automatic choice to write the K9 pilot. Of all those to have written and directed material for Season 18, only Terrance Dicks understood the disciplines and restrictions of television as well, and he was full-time employed anyway on the Sunday Classic Serials, which would have presented problems commissioning him simultaneously as a writer for another

in-house BBC production.

An experienced Producer with many long-running series to his credit (including *Doomwatch* and *Survivors*), Dudley had directed MEGLOS for John Nathan-Turner, but confessed at the time he was getting rather old for the endurance required of a Director. Given the opportunity, he would be far happier to earn money from the less strenuous exercise of writing. This was a profession to which Dudley was no stranger. During his years as a Production Unit Manager, John Nathan-Turner had worked on several episodes of *All Creatures Great and Small* scripted by him and so knew he could deliver the goods.

Christopher Bidmead also took Dudley at his word and invited some idea submissions for season 19. Two eminently workable storylines were forthcoming. The first, a purely historical murder mystery set in the 1920s, was pigeon-holed by Bidmead as it contained no science-fiction elements. The second, a *Brazil* style parody of bureaucracy and authoritarianism gone mad, was provisionally accepted and its author further commissioned to write a story breakdown and a first episode script.

That ultimately fell through due to character and dialogue problems but as 1981 dawned Dudley was hard at work again on a replacement story, which would see the light of day as *FOUR TO DOOMSDAY*. It was during writer's meetings to discuss *FOUR TO DOOMSDAY* that Dudley was asked to come up with some plot ideas for a K9 adventure, set on Earth minus the Doctor, that would introduce a human hero and heroine.

K9's creators Bob Baker and Dave Martin were not consulted as to the setting of the series, in part because Earth was the only setting the budget for a 90-minute K9 adventure would allow. John Nathan-Turner had already worked out he would not be able to afford a future-based series with expensive overheads for costumes, sets and effects, so present day England it would have to be.

Christopher Bidmead formally left *Doctor Who* with the completion of *LOGOPOLIS* in March 1981, having done varying amounts of preparatory work on *KINDA*, *THE VISITATION*, *FOUR TO DOOMSDAY* and the K9 adventure. Of all these, K9 was the least developed.

Bidmead's replacement was Antony Root, a 27-year-old graduate who had started working for the BBC on a temporary basis in 1979 as an Assistant Floor Manager. He became a full-time employee when he transferred to working in the Script Unit, completing a Script-Editor's course before moving to the Drama Series and Serials Department. It was from here that he began helping out Christopher Bidmead when the work load on the *Doctor Who* Script-Editor became untenable around the turn of the year. Several fairly advanced script projects were falling through, including submissions by Tanith Lee, Christopher Priest and the MEGLOS pair John Flanagan & Andrew McCulloch.

Root knew his attachment to the *Doctor Who* office was only for a three month period, or until a new permanent Script-Editor could be found. So instead of commissioning any new material, he devoted his time to working on scripts that were already in hand, especially *FOUR TO DOOMSDAY* which was due to start shooting in April. As it was the least critical in these highly fraught months, the K9 pilot again went onto the back burner.

The next move happened on May 12th when John Nathan-Turner met Elisabeth Sladen. It had not been lost on the Producer that Sarah-Jane Smith was the all-time most popular companion. Again unlike any of his predecessors, Nathan-Turner was more than happy to have former assistants, as well as old monsters, turning up in his *Doctor Whos* from time to time. As far back as the planning stages for Christopher Priest's *SEALED ORDERS*, he had lunched with Louise Jameson in the hope of persuading her to appear as Leela, re-united in a cameo role with K9.

The initial parameters for the K9 pilot were loose enough to admit any one of several former companion actresses, or even to design a totally new one if none expressed interest. The essential element was that of a fairly well-off woman with independent means living in the country. The role could have been tailored to fit Polly, Dodo, Victoria, Liz, Jo or even Romana, but the prime choice from the start was always Sarah-Jane.

After leaving *Doctor Who* in 1976 Elisabeth Sladen had



## The Return of K9...

"Having spent £2,000 — which was a hell of a lot of money in 1979 — on updating K9, so that it could travel over anything instead of sticking on a piece of Elastoplast, on my first day as producer I was ordered to get rid of it.

"I hated K9; I thought it was the most preposterous bit of artefact that was introduced into the show — it was so smug and cute. That's with all due respect to John Leeson and David Brierley, who did the voice, both of whom were marvellous; it was just the concept of it, it was so loony! So, we wrote it out as quickly as possible, with about fourteen 'deaths'; it went into the sea, somebody chopped its head off, and then finally it went. Then two newspapers, *The Daily Star* and *The Sun*, ran 'Save K9' campaigns — it was literally front page — and they issued badges and all that kind of stuff. This

went on for about three weeks, and then the powers-that-be at the BBC rang down and said "Why are you getting rid of K9? It's so popular!"

"Out of desperation, I said "Well, what about a spin-off programme?" They said "Hang on, we'll get back to you", and within a day they came back and said "Yes. We'll take it for Christmas." So that's how the K9 spin-off happened.

"I do think that, with Lis Sladen in the show, it worked very well. Our only mistake was that we focused a little bit too much on black magic. I think if it had been something a little less (potentially) sinister, we might be getting K9 and Company now. I take full responsibility for that focus, but [with hindsight] we should have done something a bit different.

John Nathan Turner, speaking at Visions '93

continued in television, handling a wide variety of roles, from comedy in *Take My Wife* to drama with *Send in the Girls*, where she had played opposite husband Brian Miller. She even did a stint alongside Keith Barron presenting an educational series for children called *Stepping Stones*.

At her meeting with John Nathan-Turner, Elisabeth Sladen confirmed she was interested in doing the *K9* production but that she would not be free to work on it until the end of October as she was contracted to do *Gulliver in Lilliput* for Barry Letts throughout the late summer and early autumn.

This put a spanner in the works as John Nathan-Turner had planned to shoot the *K9* movie during those summer months while Peter Davison was away recording the second series of *Sink or Swim* (see *IN-VISION*, issue 52, page 20). Faced with the choice of going without Elisabeth Sladen or shooting later in the year, Nathan-Turner chose the latter. He had secured the star name he wanted and the script title was duly amended to read *Sarah and K9*.



*A dog's best friend is his voice: K9 gives John Leeson his support...*

**SCRIPT-EDITING:** In conjunction with Terence Dudley, Antony Root supervised the bulk of the writing and polishing of the *K9* and *Company* draft script although he left to take up a permanent appointment on the police series *Juliet Bravo* before a wholly complete version was ready.

The decision to move Antony Root was sudden and made at departmental level. He was told his three month secondment was up and that he would have to return to being an AFM for a while. Root objected and threatened to quit the BBC. A few days later he was told he could move to *Juliet Bravo*. After an abortive attempt to head hunt *All Creatures...* Script-Editor Ted Rhodes, Root's replacement on *Doctor Who*, initially just for a four month trial period, was freelance writer Eric Saward.

One of the first people Saward was introduced to was fan Ian Levine. With advice and help from him on continuity, a finished draft was ready by mid-summer.

In terms of content, much of the draft script of *Sarah and K9* resembled the novelisation written by Terence Dudley for W.H. Allen in 1987. One running joke was Sarah continually getting irritated by slow drivers in her path; the usual response being a fusillade on her car horn followed by rapid overtaking and a yell of abuse to the hapless motorist.

A hallmark of any Terence Dudley script was the level of detail in the accompanying sleeve-notes. The opening coven scene featured the following suggestions to the Director and cameraman:

"THE HIGH PRIESTESS takes a taper from the altar and lights it from the altar candle. She throws the taper into the cauldron and the liquid bursts into flame. The chanting intensifies. CUT TO close on some vegetation well outside the perimeter of the circle. A hand parts the vegetation and the cauldron's flames flicker over the face of PETER TRACEY. He is a wiry 20-year-old with the same gypsy looks of his father. His face is tense, rapt without curiosity or fear."

"CUT TO the coven. The HIGH PRIESTESS turns to the HIGH PRIEST who hands her a portrait-sized photograph. The HIGH PRIESTESS holds it out towards the fire. CLOSE ON the photograph. We see a handsome, middle-aged woman. The photograph is thrown into the cauldron. The chanting intensifies again. Suddenly the HIGH PRIESTESS flings up her arms and the chanting ceases abruptly. Her voice is distorted and unidentifiable behind the mask..."

To the set Designer Dudley offered the following ideas for the layout of George Tracey's living room;

"The living room of a small country cottage. It is well appointed and in no way suggests poverty or rural simplicity. A pentangle has been roughly drawn in chalk on a table top. A ceremonial knife is plunged into the table in the centre of the pentangle. GEORGE TRACEY stands before a shadowed, unidentifiable figure..."

The major script changes came when David Reid (Shaun Sutton's successor as Head of Drama) read the draft outline and

decided there was just insufficient basic plot to sustain a 90-minute production with a planned two weeks of filming. The running length was cut to 50-minutes and the budget adjusted accordingly.

The fallout from these decisions on the script was not as drastic as the effective halving of resources might suggest. Much of what Eric Saward deleted were lengthier versions of planned film sequences which, while they would have helped to give *Sarah and K9* a glossy look, were superfluous to the main plot.

The passage below is an illustration of footage planned but never shot:-

"C.U SARAH-JANE SMITH in her car. It is Friday December 18th 1981.

SARAH: (yelling) Fool! Idiot! Imbecile! Cretin!

Her vehicle is behind an ancient car in charge of which is an elderly woman who is waiting, indecisive, manually signalling a right turn and automatically signalling a left. SARAH-JANE is trapped as there is another car at her rear.

SARAH: Women drivers!

The woman driver cancels both signals and drives straight on. SARAH-JANE growls and overtakes in a flash. The woman driver turns out to be an old man with fashionable locks. SARAH-JANE scoffs and then laughs to herself. Her vehicle roars on..."

There was no time to complete all the pruning before the Director joining date in mid-September and so in most cases it was the un-cut draft scripts which were circulated to potential cast and crew members. Where possible John Nathan-Turner wanted to keep material that could be filmed in a week, and so the remaining edits needed to excise forty minutes were to any lines that did not directly advance the plot.

A good example is Bill Pollock explaining market gardening to Sarah and Brendan during their first meeting:-

"POLLOCK: ...If we don't pick up next year, we go bankrupt. We operate on a three year cycle. Everything depends on the weather.

SARAH: Pick-it-yourself soft fruit?

POLLOCK: Everything. Last spring was wet and warm and that was all right. But the weekends were bad. A fine Saturday in the summer and four thousand customers use the shop. Bad weather; forget it! The year before we had two late frosts; killed the lot.

SARAH: Nothing under glass?

POLLOCK: Only some propagating. You can't get the labour here for high input, output stuff. Not in this area. South coast maybe; not here.

SARAH: I hope I can be of some help.

POLLOCK: Your aunt rather left it to us.

SARAH: Brendan says it's all scientific these days...

On October 22nd John Nathan-Turner visited Elisabeth Sladen on the set of *Gulliver in Lilliput* to hand her the revised scripts and to explain about the cuts forced on the production. Undeterred, *K9*'s co-star confirmed she was still eager to do the show and to try

*Continued on page 8*





NOT JUST ANYBODY can hail the formidable Tom Baker in mid-stride, but then Elisabeth Sladen has never claimed to be just anybody. At the peak of their partnership on *Doctor Who* there was an instance she recalls where the actor was being interviewed by a reporter from *The Times*. "We were down in one of the rehearsal rooms and I think because it was *The Times* Tom was being terribly aloof in his speech. "One does feel this..." he was saying. "One does like to do that..." In the end I just couldn't resist getting up and walking past them, twirling my hat and saying, "One is obviously feeling so *terrific* grand today, isn't one?" There was a sudden stunned silence, but afterwards Tom came over to me and said, "You know, you really put me in my place there".

Attempts to distinguish Elisabeth Sladen from her Sarah-Jane Smith alter-ego are exercises doomed to failure. They are as different as they are similar. While always insisting she could never have been as tough or as organised as a true investigative reporter, it was Elisabeth Sladen's own personality shining through the role that consistently for nearly twenty years has won her the world-wide accolade as the most popular *Doctor Who* companion ever.

When, in 1981, John Nathan-Turner first entertained the notion of a spin-off series starring one of the past *Doctor Who* companions, there was only ever one serious choice for the part. "According to my diary it was May 12th when Nathan (Turner) first rang me to talk about Sarah and K-9. We met up and I told him I was interested in doing it because it was a chance to do Sarah, but not quite in the same way as on *Doctor Who*. She'd be five years older, wiser, more mature and hopefully better able to take care of herself".

# A Dog's Best Friend

Even thirteen years on from **K9 and Company** there is still a unique symbiosis between Elisabeth Sladen and Sarah-Jane Smith that transcends mere performance. Choosing a venue in London's famous Langham Hotel, she arrives for her interview in attire both fitting and yet almost incongruous to the grandeur of her surroundings. An enormous baseball hat perched above an expensive white designer sweat-shirt bearing a Mickey Mouse motif epitomises a style part *Paris Match*, part 'Bash Street Kids'. Strolling amid a sea of business suits and pearl twin-sets the image is as perfect as it is eternal; Sarah is again gently poking fun at the pompous, the pretentious and the preventative. So with such a powerful cannon at the production office's disposal, how could **K9 and Company** have failed to make a series? Elisabeth Sladen thinks carefully before replying.

"The bottom line is that there should have been more time. After months of discussion everything was suddenly done in a big rush. Originally we were going to have two weeks of filming, then it was chopped down to just one. There was very little time for any pre-planning. I didn't even know right up until they first pointed the camera at me that the first thing we were shooting was the title sequence. I remember seeing it when it was shown at Christmas and being absolutely horrified at those titles. Honestly, they looked more like an episode of **Hart to Hart**

"I watched the whole thing again for the first time in years just the other evening and quite a number of new things struck me. Firstly I thought it was a lot better overall than I had remembered it, but secondly, there were still a lot of things wrong that shouldn't have been.

"For instance, the music. There was one scene where there had been an enormous amount of music, and then half way through there is a sudden great gap during a very uninteresting moment. It was the point where I'm dressed in the brown, wool jumper; I've just put the phone down, I don't do anything for a moment, and then I pick up my bag and run out of the door. Why wasn't I covered there with music? It just seemed so clumsy after so many earlier scenes had been done better."

With no prior rehearsals filming for **K9 and Company** began on November 9th, just over one week since recording had finished on one of Elisabeth Sladen's favourite productions, Barry Letts' Sunday Serial, **Gulliver in Lilliput**, with her in the role of Lady Flimnap.

"Barry was amazing on **Gulliver**. I've never been in a costume drama before or since that was directed with such flair and such control. He was so supportive, not just to me but to all the cast so that we really came away from it on a tremendous high. What I only noticed when I saw **K9...** at Christmas was that my voice in the show was still that of Lilander Flimnap. I hadn't come down from that high that Barry had built up. If you look at my opening scene with Colin Jeavons, it's very obvious that I'm hamming away like mad. What I had decided I wanted to do with Sarah was make her stronger, more interesting, terribly independent and yet what I fell back on doing was Lady Flimnap.

"I wanted to really try and develop Sarah as a role and cut down on the mouth



**"I wanted to really try and develop Sarah as a role."**

movements as a quick way out. I'm conscious that I do funny things with my mouth. Instead of letting my emotions come through as a performance, I tend to use mouth movements as a kind of visual short cut. It worked very well doing that with Lady Flimnap because she was a very petulant woman used to getting her own way, and if you ever look closely petulant people, you notice they express a great deal through their mouths. That kind of acting comes very easily to me. I wanted to cut that down on **K9...** but I still found myself doing them and it grated on me as a result.

"In performance terms **Doctor Who** is reality but you need to put it up a pitch to make it slightly comic strip. My problem was that I enjoyed doing it so much; happy to know when something was working for me, that my own innate sense of perspective left me sometimes and I found myself using mouth movements too much. It was so easy a short-hand that I realised I had to stop, go back and re-learn.

"Every time I'm asked to come back and do Sarah, ninety percent is just getting on a bicycle and riding again, but in that other ten percent there should be all the changes that have taken place in you as a person since you last played the role. The trick is to add that ten percent in a positive way.

"John Black was a very able and a very competent Director, but because he knew I had played Sarah for over three years he basically just left me to get on with it. Now I'm not the sort of person who likes to be told when she's doing well. I like to be told when I can do it better. I like to listen to ideas and find ways of using them to give that extra ten percent."

Unlike **Doctor Who**, where it is the character of the Doctor that drives the whole production along, **K9 and Company** required the assistant to step forward and assume the lead mantle. Was this a responsibility Elisabeth Sladen had

embraced warmly?

"I was conscious that there had been a lot of problems getting **K9...** off the ground. They had lost time and they had lost budget, so I didn't really want to be the one to hold things up any further. But there were times when you were screaming to yourself, "No. No. Everybody stop. There's something fundamentally wrong here. This doesn't work." The scene where Brendan and I had to remove the dog from his packing case comes to mind. We prised open the lid and then in one movement he and I put top hand and bottom hand on the side of the crate and lifted the panel up and away, just as we had been shown how to do by the prop man. But how did we, as Sarah and Brendan, know how that box opened? We had never seen it before. Yes there was a practical reason for the box being designed that way; the side had to come off because the camera could not look over and down into the crate. What was needed was some bit of covering dialogue while Brendan and I fumbled around trying to discover how the box opened. It annoys me now seeing that bit. It probably annoyed me then. It just doesn't look real.

"Similarly, there were scenes where I was required to pick up and carry **K9**. Now in the studio or out filming they always gave me the hollow version because the real one is very heavy. But then you think, "Hang on. If **K9** is that heavy, why would you be carrying him in the first place?" This was always where Tom was very good. It's the sort of thing you are expected to look out for when you're in the lead role and others are looking to you to point out these flaws."

Although pensive in hindsight for not speaking out more against these logical flaws, these were one instance where Elisabeth Sladen was pushed too far and a change was forced.

"It was the scene on location where Sarah first meets Brendan and is driving him back to the Manor. Although I had

passed my test in Manchester some years earlier I hadn't driven virtually since I had been living in London, (a) because (husband) Brian's old Ford Anglia was such a wreck, and (b) in London you don't need to drive anywhere because there is so much public transport. Beforehand John Black had said to me, "Don't worry. You won't have to do that bit. We'll just pull you." Frankly I was glad because it scared me — not just because I hadn't driven for a while, but also because there was going to be a camera on the side of the car, a sound boom in the back and there was some dialogue to do as well.

"We got to the location and no tow bar. They couldn't afford it. Suddenly it was, "Don't worry, dear. I'm sure you can just do that bit. Drive slowly and you'll be all right." But I was really scared. Fortunately John Nathan-Turner came up for the day to see us, and we were able to get the scene rewritten so that all the talking bits, which would have taken place driving in the car, took place instead between Brendan and I as we walked from the station to the car park."

Looking back on **K9 and Company** now Elisabeth Sladen is sad that a series was not forthcoming. But had it been overall an enjoyable experience returning to a role she thought she had said goodbye to forever in 1976?

"Oh yes" she replies unreservedly. "It was a wonderful opportunity to work with a wonderful cast. Linda Polan I had worked with just weeks earlier on **Gulliver** so it was nice to be back with her. Ian Sears was very conscientious, especially when you consider what they put him through. The night we filmed it was freezing cold and pouring with rain most of the time, yet poor Ian had to lie for hours on that cold stone with only a thin towel for protection.

"At the beginning all the cast were raising their arms and yelling "Hecate. Hecate". But by the end they had changed it to "Equity. Equity."

## Continued from page 5

and make it a success. *Gulliver in Lilliput* wrapped on October 31st. The next week Elisabeth Sladen was back at the Acton rehearsal block for the first read throughs on the retitled *K9 and Company*, with the first story named by Eric Saward as *A GIRL'S BEST FRIEND*.

**DIRECTOR AND TEAM:** For logistical reasons John Black was the best placed of John Nathan-Turner's troupe of preferred Directors to handle *K9 and Company*. Fiona Cumming was busy supervising post-production on *CASTROVALVA*, Ron Jones was engaged on *BLACK ORCHID*, and Peter Grimwade was gearing up for *EARTHSHOCK*. Peter Moffatt was now free but as John Black had only ever directed studio based *Doctor Who* John Nathan-Turner elected to give him the opportunity to do a story with a week's filming.

The first production hurdle to be scaled was pulling together a creative team. Elisabeth Sladen's non-availability during the summer meant that no studios were available in London throughout the autumn, particularly as *Doctor Who* itself was now back in production. Birmingham was the nearest and largest venue after London, and the Pebble Mill studios already had proved their worth to the series, having played host to *HORROR OF FANG ROCK* in 1977 (see *IN-VISION*, issue 24).

Three of the Main Designers therefore hailed from Pebble Mill, Nigel Jones for Set Design, Ann Arnold for Costumes and Susie Bancroft for Make-up. In all cases *K9 and Company* would be their first exposure to science-fiction/supernatural programming, but as the pilot was so present day Earth-based anyway, no specialist materials or freelance skills would be required.

Unlike 1977, the Pebble Mill Studios of 1981 did now have a rudimentary capability for video effects, so it was not necessary to appoint a London based electronic effects specialist. Pebble Mill's own Nick Moore had all the facilities to hand he would need.

The only area where Birmingham could not help was Visual Effects. With *K9* so centre-stage in this production, the choice of Visual Effects Designer was never in any doubt. Mat Irvine with his vast experience of both maintaining and operating the dog was pre-assigned even before Director joining date.

Neither was there a question that anybody other than John Leeson would provide the voice for *K9*.

Fronting the guest cast was Bill Fraser. Terence Dudley, John Nathan-Turner and Fraser had all worked together on the *Doctor Who* serial *MEGLOS*, where the latter had enhanced his curmudgeonly image by announcing to the Press he had only agreed to appear as General Grugger on the condition he got to kick *K9* during the show. As early as their first discussions about the *K9* pilot Nathan-Turner and Dudley agreed they wanted a central character specifically

actress Mary Wimbush, a radio regular with no fewer than four regular roles in *The Archers* to her credit. In fact, as Lavinia Smith was supposedly "in her late sixties" at the time of *THE TIME WARRIOR*, Mary Wimbush was (at 58) if any thing too young for the role...

Completing the line-up was teenage actor Ian Sears, making his first major TV appearance. Sears had been cast from a number of young actors who had read for the part, among them future luminary Gary Russell who was, at the time, a member of the *Doctor Who* Appreciation Society.

The only member of the cast who would not receive any payment for his work on this show was Bill Fraser's Alsatian dog Bruno, who would play the renamed role of Jasper.

**SET DESIGN:** With the story so firmly listed as happening across four days leading up to Christmas 1981 in present-day England, there was little to worry Designer Nigel Jones other than some research into typical interiors to be found in older Cotswold village houses.

The biggest set needing to occupy the main Studio One at Pebble Mill was the adjoining hall and sitting room of the Manor House at Moreton Harwood. The most richly appointed of all the sets the sitting room featured a well-stocked book case, arched windows facing out onto a countryside backdrop and even a mock Adam-style fire place with plumbed in gas pipes so that a fire could be lit whenever required. Two doors either side of the fireplace led out to a wood-panelled hall complete with mock staircase and a heavy wooden front door with a porch beyond. One of the busiest members of the production team was Property Buyer Michael Preece, whose job it was to hire or to purchase all the furniture, pictures, fixtures and fittings needed for the show. Even a Christmas tree was on his list.

Four other smaller sitting room sets were needed; a chintzy, opulent looking sitting room for the 'nouveau riche' Bakers, a comfortable but masculine decorated living room for the Traceys, a very homely looking parlour with a view out to a Post Office counter for Lilly Gregson, and a small, very basic den area for Bill Pollock. Both the Baker and the Gregson lounges featured working fireplaces.

Filling up the remaining studio space were two smaller, more Spartan sets; Brendan's cellar prison and the reception area of the Police Station.

Two moveable scenery flats were also constructed which could be lifted into place when required; a phone box interior plus a sky backdrop, which came from stock, and a section of hotel bedroom dressed to represent Lavinia Smith's accommodation in America.

On location there was very little for the design team to do other than ensuring props, such as ladders and garden gnomes, were positioned strategically, some construction work for the wrecked greenhouse section, and marking out the ceremonial circle in the ruined farm building and chapel.

**COSTUME:** Of all the Designers, Ann Arnold had to do the most travelling and pre-production work. Based in Birmingham she was a frequent visitor to London during the month leading up to the start of shooting, measuring up all the principle cast members and agreeing their clothing needs.

The only special costumes needed were the robes worn by the Priest and Priestess of the Coven. The basic garment was a black monk's robe that could be hired from a costume warehouse. Thirteen of these were needed in all for the coven members, two having a front tabard with a pentacle motif added. The goat masks were fashioned in fibreglass with cloth helmets attached so that they would completely hide the features of those underneath. Inlaid with real matted goat hair and sprayed white with black highlights these masks offered a further advantage in that they effectively disguised the voices of those wearing them — as the script had directed they should.

Leading members of the cast were taken out shopping in West London to hunt down outfits suitable for the roles they would play. Most of the artists were allowed to choose three or four changes of clothing to reflect the four days over which the adventure takes place. Ian Sears was the only problem. Older and taller than Brendan's 14-years it proved impossible to find an off-the-peg school uniform that would fit him for his opening scenes. Instead his school shirt and tie were complemented by dark trousers and a light tweed jacket from a gentleman's outfitters.

The Costume Department at Pebble Mill put together Brendan's white sacrificial apron.

Being the star, Elisabeth Sladen got the biggest wardrobe. No less than ten changes of apparel were assembled, comprising a blue duffle coat, a white trench coat, dark trousers and a rust wool sweater, a red pastel house coat, a grey wool trouser suit, a russet trouser and blouse combination, a beige suit, a pink and blue jogging outfit, a blue chequer patterned driver's coat and, Elisabeth Sladen's favourite, a brown reversible full length cape with a matching dress.

**MAKE-UP:** The Make-up department had no tasks to fulfil prior to shooting. Elisabeth Sladen herself had chosen the chestnut colour her hair was throughout this production. It merely fell to Make-Up artist Susie Bancroft to ensure it stayed full bodied throughout several days of filming in damp and cold weather conditions.

Ian Sears needed a lot of coloured powder make-up during the sacrifice scenes both to stop his skin shining under the big orange arc lights, and to tone his flesh colour away from the blue shade it went that cold, frosty night.

**VISUAL EFFECTS:** Mat Irvine attended the film unit's reconnaissance of the selected locations on Tuesday 3rd November. Aside from concerns over the terrain *K9* would be expected to cross, his



Bill Fraser was judged a silly old goat for kicking *K9*...

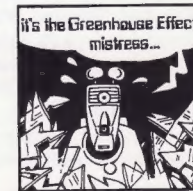
written for Bill Fraser as both were fans of his grumbling, lugubrious performances.

Colin Jeavons took the part of the villainous gardener George Tracey. Rarely a starring name actor, Welsh-born Jeavons was nevertheless a talented character actor equally at home playing drama (*The Avengers*, *The Sweeney*, *Minder*) or comedy (*It's Your Funeral*, *Up Pompeii*). Neither was he a stranger to science-fiction, having played the role of Jim Piper in the Seventies Nigel Kneale spoof s/f series *Kinvig*. His last appearance in *Doctor Who* had been back in 1967 as Professor Zaroff's cohort scientist, Damon in *THE UNDERWATER MENACE*.

The other member of the cast to have had a past role in *Doctor Who* was Neville Barber. In 1972 he had been Professor Cook in the first two episodes of *THE TIME MONSTER*. In this pilot he landed the part of Juno Baker's husband, Howard.

Linda Polan, as Juno, joined Elisabeth Sladen hot-foot from *Gulliver in Lilliput* where she had been cast in the leading role of the Queen.

Dudley's script describes Sarah's aunt Lavinia Smith as "a handsome, middle-aged woman". Casting against this suggestion John Black plumbed for an older, daughter-of-the-empire figure more in the mould of Margaret Rutherford by selecting character





main need was to scout out the building ruin where the cauldron would be erected. One overhead Effects were expected to cover was providing all the 'flambeau' torches — the hand-held ones as well as those which would be wall-mounted. The wall-mounted torches also needed brackets fixing into the stone work.

The cauldron was hired from a props warehouse, as were all the black magic artifacts. Because the film crew knew they could not depend on the weather, the fire underneath the cauldron would be provided from a set of gas jet-burners.

The ladders that had to fall, domino-style, as K9 collides with them were all linked together with wires. This was imperative as the BBC was not going to be allowed to demolish a green house by the owners of the market garden location. Hidden by careful camera angles and precise cutting of the film, the falling ladders would be arrested before they touched the greenhouses.

Back in London Mat Irvine and assistant Tony Auger's main duties were checking out K9's mechanics and electrics prior to filming, and giving him a new coat of paint to reflect his status as K9 mark III.

**LOCATION FILMING:** Hotel accommodation for cast and crew was arranged in the nearest large town to the location sites which was Cirencester. The village that would become Moreton Harwood was nearby Miserden although various other scenes would be shot in the roads and environs of North Woodchester and Bamsley village, all of which were within a close radius to Cirencester.

The first day of shooting was Monday 9th November. The only cast members required that day were K9 and Elisabeth Sladen. The purpose of the whole day was to shoot all the short segments of film that would go to make the title sequence. Excluding a few seconds of graphics and logo, just over a minute's worth of titles were needed, but as John Nathan-Turner had specified they should resemble the opening credits for the U.S series **Hart to Hart**, the majority of the clips going into the montage would not exceed two seconds in length. Extensive editing would be needed to compile and synchronise the titles with the already recorded theme music, hence why as early a date as possible had to be arranged for the raw filming.

The very first shot in the can was the distance zoom in to a trench-coated Sarah leaning against her blue Metro. Six hours and numerous changes of outfit later John Black had captured sequences of his heroine driving, jogging, reading a newspaper, drinking a glass of wine, sitting on a wall and swinging her hair in the approved style of a shampoo commercial. K9 too had been filmed between costume and location changes from a variety of angles and in close-up. A side elevation shot of the dog was carefully photographed as this would be used as a background caption to the rolling end-title credits.

The Birmingham film crew were unavailable Tuesday and Wednesday, hence location filming for **K9 and Company** did not properly get under way until Thursday 12th November.

As Terence Dudley's storyline had blocked the narrative out specifically over four days, a lot of filming took place broadly speaking in story order. Enough was scheduled out of order, however, to give the Production Assistant a full-time job keeping

track of Elisabeth Sladen's changes of costume.

Day one concentrated on all the scenes around the exterior of the manor house, starting with Sarah's arrival and her first meeting with George Tracey. The shortening winter days meant that full night-time shoots were not always needed. The team only had to wait until after sun-down to shoot many of these shorter scenes.

One scene that had to be changed totally was Sarah's first meeting with Brendan. This was originally scheduled for the afternoon. A fixed angle camera mount was to be attached to the Metro, the interior wired for sound and Sarah would drive the car along a country lane while talking to the boy about the joys of boarding school. Unhappy at the prospect of having to remember lines, act and drive a powerful car along a wet road when she had not driven for a while, Elisabeth Sladen announced she would not do the scene this way — a decision upon which she would not compromise. Filming wrapped early that first day.

Day two took place in the market garden location. A lengthy day with both night-time and daylight scenes required, plus some stunt work and special construction, kept the team very busy. Trickiest of all to co-ordinate was the arrival of the Police panda car which had to turn into the driveway just as Sarah and Bill Pollock conclude an exchange about the attack on Brendan.

During the morning John Nathan-Turner took time away from EARTHSHOCK rehearsals in London to travel up to the Cotswolds. He had arranged a Press-call for reporters and photographers before the day's filming to announce the K9 special being done for Christmas.

Staying overnight at the hotel he worked through with John Black and Elisabeth Sladen an alternative way of doing the opening Sarah/Brendan scene that would not involve any lengthy driving.

At short notice the next day a petrol station in Miserden was requisitioned. The village did not have a railway line of its own but the petrol station did comprise a number of grey stone buildings that could double at a pinch with careful use of camera angles.

As well as the 'railway station', scenes in the can on day three included the Police station exteriors, some driving scenes, and a filmed but ultimately dropped sequence of Sarah arriving at the Post Office only to find it closed, knocking at the door and being greeted by Lilly Gregson.

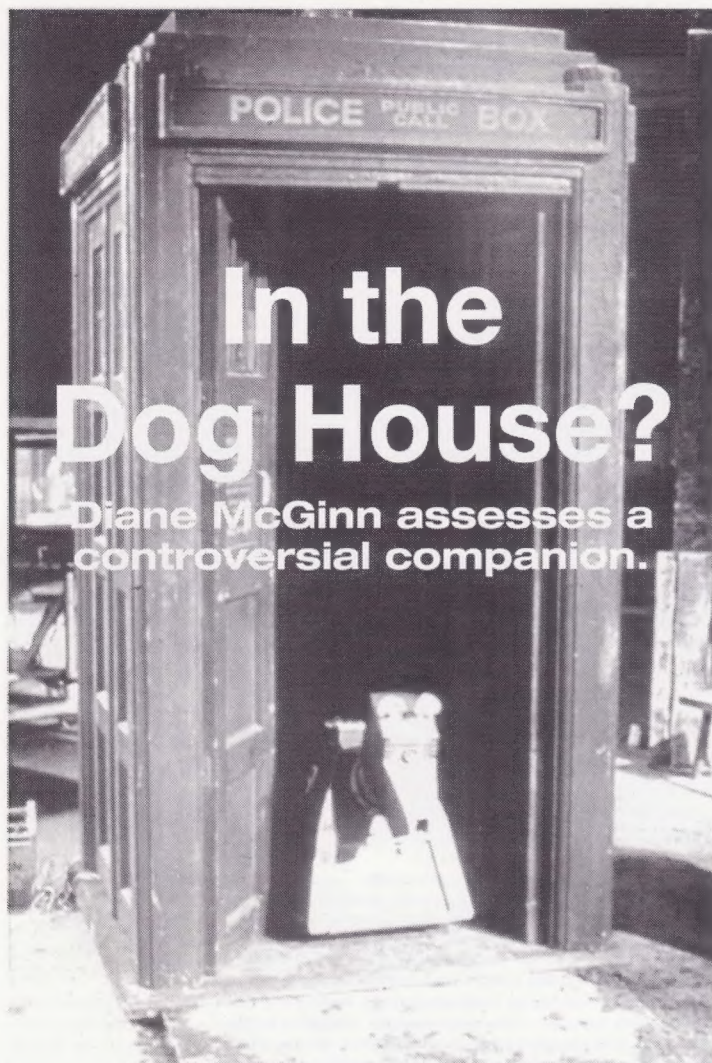
On day four the weather brightened but also got colder. Nearly all the scenes this day were of Sarah on the road with K9, starting with their arrival at Tracey's cottage. The script had suggested Sarah was carrying K9 hidden inside a hold-all, but in truth no commercially available carry-bag was big enough to encompass the dog's physical dimensions. So the scene was re-jigged to feature K9 riding propped up in the back of the Metro, with Sarah lifting the dummy version out onto the drive after they pull up.

Afternoon saw the stunt scene performed as Sarah swerves the car to avoid the tractor Tracey has aimed to collide with her. For this a stunt double had been pre-booked in the form of Susie Brown who did the scene dressed and with a wig to make her appear like Sarah-Jane.

*Elisabeth Sladen tried to remember the weight of the dog when lifting the dummy...*



*Continued on page 12*



IF THE DEADLY ASSASSIN saw the first serious breach between the views of the 'fan on the street' and the 'fan in the DWAS', then it was the arrival of K9 a year later which made this break permanent. As John Nathan-Turner recounts it, the eventual result of this breach was **K9 and Company**, commissioned by BBC executives shocked at the tabloid storm provoked by the decision to do away with the dog — a move which was merely one

step in a wider campaign to "make the series more adult and dramatic".

Such a description echoes the prevalent view within the DWAS of the time: that K9 was intended principally to appeal to children, while providing occasional comic relief for a series increasingly over-burdened with humour. Fan comment of the time (as reflected by *IN-VISION*'s reprints of contemporary reviews covering the eighteenth season) saw him as at

best 'a good idea gone wrong', and at worst as the epitome of a series "going to the silly robot dogs" in an attempt to reproduce *Star Wars*' appeal to the kiddies.

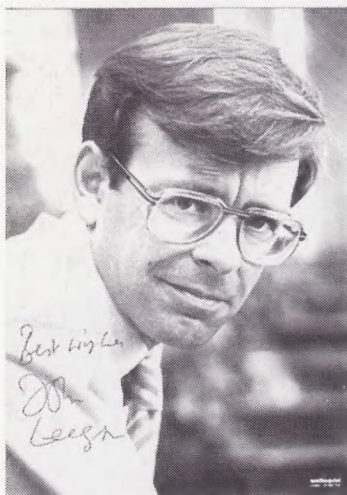
If that were the aim, then K9 was to prove an unusual success. TV chiefs frequently forget three essential points: Children's television all too often seems patronising and smug to youngsters hooked on **EastEnders** (**Doctor Who**'s popularity with children perhaps flowing from its equal success with adults); teenage heroes tend to nauseate child viewers; and cute robots rarely engage the affection of children beyond the age of five. Though K9 was not in fact inspired by the success of R2-D2 (as is so frequently assumed), he rode the crest of that wave, and it's instructive to consider the failure of an American attempt to appeal to the same market. As a robot dog, **Battlestar Galactica**'s daggit might bear a close conceptual resemblance to K9 at first glance, but whilst K9's popularity amongst the general audience won him a spin-off pilot, even the kiddified **Galactica 1980** didn't dare place the daggit centre-stage.

What saves K9 from the daggit's fate is his inherent nature: he's not the pet of some child genius (and when teamed with Adric and Brendan loses no time in asserting his position as their mentor and guardian); nor is he the comically unreliable creation of some eccentric professor (whatever the implications of Professor Marius' accent), as his failures are always a cause for dramatic concern. He is, at base, a functional mobile computer (a point noted with approval by TARDIS' Chris Dunk in late '77), his dog-like attributes a mere affection. K9 himself supports such a view, consistently dismissing attempts to treat him as a dog as "mockery" while forming a lasting partnership with Romana, a sheltered graduate of the Time Lord citadel whose inexperience with animals leads her to treat him from the start as a computer. In many ways he predicts the flock of customised personal computers, laden with sampled soundbites and colourful screen-savers, which would come to fill offices

and studies nationwide by the nineties.

Once this comparison is accepted, a common complaint about K9 is undermined. That K9 should so frequently serve as a 'mobile blaster cum encyclopaedia' was a source of some concern to the critics of the time, a proof of lazy scripting. Yet this indicates merely that K9 was treated as a versatile tool for the Doctor to use as he chose — an unusual attitude at a time when computers were still subject to some awe, but one which seems natural fifteen years after the ZX80.

In 1979 K9's operator, Nigel Brackley, commented on this in an interview, noting that K9 merely followed instructions, and would never act without them (as is for instance the case in part one of *THE ARMAGEDDON FACTOR*, when K9 fails to prevent the Doctor's capture by the Marshal). Though there are of course exceptions to this rule, **K9 and Company** is nevertheless something of a departure for the dog, as K9's actions in cutting down the coven *resolve* the plot for the first time in his history. Until then, his interventions had only served to expedite the flow of events — by freeing the Doctor from captivity, by providing information, or by triggering a device... K9's role might be signifi-



## John Leeson

### Biographical

Worked in a bookshop and a hospital.  
Early '60s: Trained at RADA.  
1970s on: Living in Ealing.  
Question setter for **Mastermind**

### Stage

Dunce in a play at kindergarten.  
1964: Lord Lister in *The Chiltern Hundreds*; Frinton Summer Theatre.  
Miscellaneous repertory work.  
1960s: 'Shakespeare in the Desert'; Phoenix & Tucson, Arizona — including *Macbeth*, *As You Like It*.  
13-12-74 — 31-12-74: Shepherd in *Mak the Sheepstealer*; Pantomime touring Oxfordshire & Gloucestershire.

### Film

1978: Secretary of the Hunt in *Tarka the Otter*; Tor Films

### Television

Tramp in *The Wedding Feast*; first TV appearance.  
26-12-67 — 3-1-68: Henri de Burgoyne in **Crossroads**; 6 eps; ATV; prod. Reg Watson.  
20-10-69: Clapper Boy in **Dear Mother... Love Albert**; A COMMERCIAL BREAK; Thames; dir. Derrick Goodwin.  
11-12-69: First Soldier in **Dad's Army**; SONS OF THE SEA; BBC; prod. David Croft.  
1972: Bungle the Bear in **Rainbow**; ITV; dir Robert Reed. [Photo in TV Times, 17-10-72: Leeson credited in caption, but only the skin is visible!]

1-10-77 — 22-10-77: Nucleus Voice in **Doctor Who**: *THE INVISIBLE ENEMY*; BBC; dir. Derrick Goodwin.  
8-10-77 — 11-3-78: Voice of K9 in **Doctor Who**, Season 15; BBC; regular, 17 eps. of 26; prod. Graham Williams.  
13-2-78: Pasco in **Blake's 7**: *MISSION TO DESTINY*; BBC; dir. Pennant Roberts.  
2-9-78 — 24-3-79: Voice of K9 in **Doctor Who**, season 16; BBC; regular, 21 eps. of 26; prod. Graham Williams.  
23-12-78 — 13-1-79: Dugeen in **Doctor Who**: *THE POWER OF KROLL*, 4 eps.; BBC; dir. Norman Stewart.  
20-3-79: Toise in **Blake's 7**: *GAMBIT*; BBC; dir. George Spenton Foster.  
9-10-79: Military Tailor in **Prince Regent**, ep. 5; BBC; dir. Michael Simpson.  
30-8-81 — 24-1-81: Voice of K9 in **Doctor Who**, season 18; BBC; regular, 20 eps. of 28; prod. John Nathan-Turner.  
28-12-81: Voice of K9 in **K9 and Company**: *A GIRL'S BEST FRIEND*; BBC; dir. John Black.

cant, but it's never conclusive: he delivers the Doctor to the Shadow's lair, but does not attempt to stun the Shadow and his mates; he guns down the guards of the Three-Who-Rule (a role significantly omitted from the audio-tape), but this merely allows the Doctor a chance to deal with the *real* threat, the Great Vampire. It is this which makes K9 unusual amongst small screen robots: *Galactica's* daggit remained a peripheral irritant, while *Lost in Space's* Robot came to dominate the action. K9 strikes a happy balance between the two, contributing throughout whilst remaining a supporting character.

With hindsight, K9 was clearly a product of his time, and it's difficult to imagine him standing alongside any Doctor but Tom Baker. But just as it sometimes seems that there are fans who regard Doctor Who's entire history as leading up to the arrival of the McCoy/Aldred team, and its return without them as anathema, so to the young fan of 1980 it appeared that the TARDIS crew had at last reached its final form. Their faces and voices might change, but the Doctor, Romana and K9 would remain aboard forever. For such viewers, the next year was to prove a rude awakening, and *K9 and Company* merely a brief reprieve.



25-11-83: Voice of K9 in *Doctor Who: The Five Doctors*; BBC; dir. Peter Moffatt.  
??-??-85: *The Great Egg Race*; BBC. [Teams built special effects for a 'haunted house play' starring Leeson; Mat Irvine was the judge.]

5-10-88 — 26-10-88: Dalek (etc) Voices in *Doctor Who: Remembrance of the Daleks*; BBC; dir. Andrew Morgan.

21-1-89: First Steward in *'Allo 'Allo*, season five, ep. 21; BBC; dir. Richard Boden.  
8-3-89: Dickinson in *Shadow of the Noose*; BBC; dir. Sebastian Graham-Jones.

21-11-90: Voice of K9 in *Search Out Science*; BBC; dir. Berry-Anne Billingsley.

24-11-91: *Beadle's About*; LWT; prod. Robert Randell.

1993: Mr Witchell in *The Bill*.

5-6-93: Guest celebrity on *The Main Event*; BBC.

#### Other

Talking Books for the blind.

1990: Station announcer for Channel 4.

# MUTT & MAT

Although not the creator of K9, MAT IRVINE could easily lay claim to the title of adopted parent. Following his departure from *Doctor Who*, the mechanical hound went on to feature in a number of television programmes, some of them educational in nature, including *Search Out Science*, *The Computer Programme*, *Mat and Mutt* and even an appearance on *The Generation Game*. It was perhaps inevitable that when the production go-ahead was given for *A Girl's Best Friend*, MAT IRVINE once again found himself operating controls that had, by now, almost become second nature to him.

IT WAS originally going to be a series of six individual stories, half an hour or fifty minutes in length, produced by the *Doctor Who* office. But then, if my memory serves me correctly, they found that they just could not come up with enough plots involving the dog to do it satisfactorily. Consequently it got reduced down to just the one story.

I was not involved right from the beginning simply because, for all the reasons I've just outlined, there were a lot of changes made before finally the whole thing went into production and people got assigned to the project.

Again purely from my own point of view, there was never any doubt it was going to be a project handled by the *Doctor Who* office. It was their spin-off idea and so it was logical the *Doctor Who* people would handle it. I appreciate logic and the BBC are frequently contrary subjects, but certainly here there never was any suggestion it was going to be handled by, say, the Children's Department.

The script I first saw was, more or less, the show that was made; basically a *Doctor Who* plot without the Doctor in it. About the only main difference I noticed was the budget. On just about every *Doctor Who* one costed out the effects only to be told there was never enough money to do it that way. Here I think there was a little bit more money on the table

because it was being done as a one-off and possibly, as well, because it was being done as a pilot with potentially a series in mind if it was successful.

As far as our department's contribution went this was a slightly unusual show in that there was a requirement for Effects to be present all the time, mainly because the dog featured so prominently. Sometimes on a *Doctor Who* Effects don't need to attend the filming or, maybe, one of the studios, but here one of us needed to be around constantly, if only to look after and operate K9. On the other hand, the actual Effects overhead on this show was relatively small, so it actually only needed two of us to do it as opposed to the normal set-up of around five.

One thing that immediately struck me from reading the script was that here we had a totally new K9 that no-one had ever seen before. In other words, he wasn't the original gold-coloured K9, nor the mark II charcoal-grey version the Doctor had given to Romana at the end of *WARRIORS' GATE*. In practical terms, of course, he was the same K9 Romana had been given, so my first suggestion was that even if we were not going to rebuild him, we should give this K9 a different coat of paint to distinguish him as the mark III K9 owned by Sarah-Jane.

For the benefit of any purists out there, the paint we used for the mark III

was a "Rover" brown topped with a "Renault" metallic blue. The insides had already been rebuilt for *WARRIORS' GATE* so technically it would be true to say the upgrade of the mark II to the mark III did not all happen in the same story. Funny enough, when we came to do the *Search Out Science* programmes some time later and all the insides got rebuilt yet again, we did toy with the idea of identifying this as the mark IV K9 by painting him the same racing-green colour as the original "Dapol" toy. In the end, however, we decided not to as it was felt more people would remember the dog from his *Doctor Who* related appearances.

In truth the only elements that survived from the mark I right up to the mark IV were the tartan collar and the dog-tag. Everything else, from the interior mechanics and electrics to the exterior casing has been rebuilt in some way. Sometimes this was to incorporate a requirement of the plot, sometimes it was purely to make our lives easier as the people with the job of maintaining him.

With the mark III, for instance, we added a handle at the back which made carrying him less arm-aching. Not only was this for our benefit, it also helped the actors whenever they were required to pick up and run with the dummy version. That was an obvious change. Less obvious, but with enormous practical value to



ourselves was the addition of a hinged, recessed back panel, right underneath the tail, which gave us better access to some of the insides. It was an invisible modification as far as the show was concerned, but it saved the need virtually to strip the prop down every time you had to change a gear wheel or a drive belt.

One thing we knew was going to happen in this story was a lot more close-ups of the dog. He was, after all, going to be the co-star alongside Elisabeth Sladen. In the past this had been less of a worry because Tom Baker was the star of **Doctor Who** and so he was centre-stage more so than his companions. To get a two-shot of the tallest Doctor with the smallest companion meant the camera always had to be some distance away. Even for what close-ups were possible it was always a case of Tom dropping down to talk to K9, never the other way around. With **K9 and Company**, firstly you had K9 in a starring role, secondly you had him with a co-star considerably smaller than Tom's six-foot-plus height, and thirdly there was wider availability of hand-held cameras which made floor-level shots much easier to do. So from that show onwards we did pay more attention to filling in cracks, smoothing down any bumps and generally always making sure we carried a supply of touch-up paint in K9's props and spares box.

K9's prop box was something I had built as a means of keeping together all the things you needed whenever the dog was required. Apart from obvious spares it housed things like radio crystals tuned to different frequencies in case you ever found yourself filming at a location where somebody's radio control aeroplane was interfering with your transmissions. Another useful extra was a tray for the radio control boxes which made it less of a burden holding them for long periods of time. Basically the tray hung around the neck the same as a cinema usherette's display of ice creams, only instead of ice creams you looked as though you were selling radio control units.

Filming the dog on location was fun when it came to doing the tracking shots of Sarah driving the car with K9 propped up in the back seat. The Director knew he wanted a modern car, and in those days the "Metro" was a very new car. He also figured he wanted a soft-top convertible

so you could shoot both Sarah and the dog, and see them clearly. The problem was, the only convertible "Metro" on the market at that time was the "Tickford" version which was a 15 lb.-per-square-inch turbo, which was a pretty hairy beast. And Lis had only just passed her driving test...

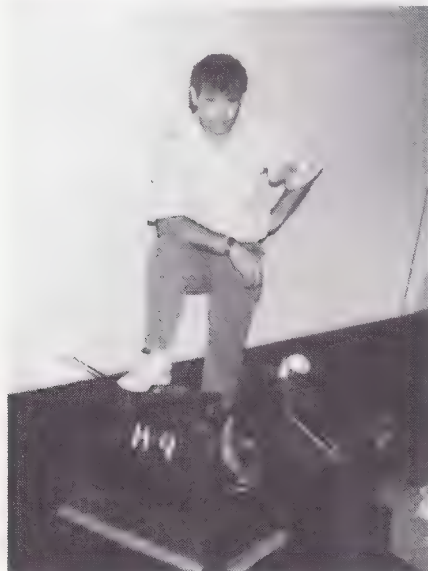
Originally we had planned just to use the dummy K9, but what we did in the end was use the real one propped up in the back of the "Metro" while I sat operating the radio control gear from the back of my own "Allegro Estate" with the hatch open, the cameraman and the Director sitting beside me, and Tony Auger, my assistant, driving the car. That way I was near enough to be able to see what was going on in the "Metro" and make the ears waggle and the lights flash at the appropriate moments. The only real worry was making sure Lis could keep the speed of this turbo-charged "Metro" down to the required twenty miles-per-hour.

The modifications Charlie Lumm and I had made for **WARRIORS' GATE** meant that, at last, K9 could move over more or less any type of ground. Uneven pavements were no longer a problem, neither was short grass. He might still rock a bit from side to side, but basically even roads and sloping gravel pathways were negotiable. Having said that, he did manage to break down right for the very last shot on location.

All the filming was done virtually in story order so the last scenes to be done were of Sarah and K9 rushing up the church yard path and saving the boy from the coven. So, of course, that is when Sod's Law tells you the drive is going to break. As part of the rebuild we had put in a model racing car differential which meant that for the first time ever if one of the front wheels got stuck, the other one would keep driving. Instantly this solved one of the biggest nightmares we had had with the dog since the beginning, but the penalty was the amount of torque going into the differential all the time due to K9's weight, which is considerably greater than that of a model racing car. What happened was the differential just sheared and we were left with the situation of no drive. This gave rise to the famously recounted story where Tony Auger fitted a length of nylon wire to the front of the dog and pulled him along while I carried on operating the ears and the gun.

Fortunately we were filming at night so nobody saw the wire. Ironically it meant the dog actually travelled a lot faster than if he had been using his own drive.

Neither was that the only disaster of the night. We also had fun and games with the cauldron. For the flames we had set up a gas rig and then suspended the prop cauldron above it. The cauldron was a hired prop and what we didn't know was that a lot of the chain joints were only held together with solder — which liquifies at low temperatures. End result; mid-way through a scene, the links all melted and with a spectacular crash the cauldron dropped into the fire.



## Continued from page 9

The road scenes continued into the evening as Sarah homes in on the site of the coven. Also filmed after dark was Sergeant Vince Wilson's death scene from supernatural (?) causes. The script specifies Wilson is killed suffused by an eerie white light, but this idea was dropped by John Black for fear audiences might think the glow was something genuinely supernatural and not just the light of the Moon. The shot of the Moon breaking through clouds was a piece of stock footage added during the film editing state. The goat, however, was not stock footage but an act of serendipity. The film crew spotted the tethered animal and decided it was too good an opportunity to miss.

The unit was allowed something of a lazy day on the Monday morning as everyone rested up ready for the long night ahead. The final venue was the ruined chapel and the scenes with the coven. Preparations by the Scenic crew and Effects had proceeded all day and filming began as soon as possible after sun-down. With only two film cameras (one of them hand held) the three major scenes — the opening as Lavinia Smith's photograph is burned, Peter Tracey's initiation, and the sacrifice ritual — all had to be done several times so that different angles could be captured.

Although rehearsals and choreography had gone on during the afternoon, no-one had prepared the cast for the biting cold of that evening. Worst affected of all was Ian Sears who had to disguise his shivers to perform as though doped and sluggish. Fortunately, although K9's drive mechanism broke down during the rout of the coven, all the Effects explosions went off to order and the unit was able to wrap before three a.m.

The only scenes left to do on Tuesday 17th November were the short day-time sequences set at the ruins. Otherwise the greater majority of the assembled cast were free to rest or to return to London.

**STUDIO RECORDING:** There was little time for the cast and crew to rest after the rigours of what had proved to be a very rushed six days of filming. After only one day off the artists were back at work, at the BBC's Acton rehearsal rooms on Thursday 19th November, their home away from home for the next week and a half.

On Saturday 28th November the cast travelled up to Birmingham ready to begin studio recording the next day. For Mat Irvine Saturday was a longer working day than for the rest as he had to be at TV Centre early morning to appear on a live edition of Noel Edmond's **Multi-Coloured Swap Shop**.

Due to the larger than normal percentage of film in **A GIRL'S BEST FRIEND**, the amount of studio work required was enough that two days were sufficient to complete the show. Added to that, a further advantage was the lack of any complicated sequences like effects shots.

In a lot of ways, the recording of this episode was a hark back to **Doctor Who** in the Sixties. Much of it was done in story order due to the relative ease in switching lighting to the different sets. All the sets, apart from the two 'floaters', were permanently erected over the two days — the time taken to change the lighting more or less corresponding with the time it took Elisabeth Sladen to switch from one costume to another.

Studio Lighting Manager Barry Hill's studio lighting was one of the triumphs of **K9 and Company**. Not only was he adept at altering colour and brightness to fit the time of day for any scene, he was also skilled in using shade and spotlighting to give tone to every scene; a warm, cosy feel to the manor house sitting room at night with the fire burning, a cold grey impression for the same but week-long empty room which greets Sarah's first arrival.

For Mary Wimbush, Linda Polan, Stephen Oxley and Neville Barber this was their first day in front of the cameras for this show as none of them had been required for the filming.

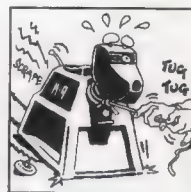
With no gallery-only day booked, the teletext transfer of film to tape occurred during breaks in recording. From his seat at the rostrum camera desk, Nick Moore was able to add the appropriate red K9 blaster beams by the "age-old" method of inlaying thin, coloured 'electronic wipes' onto composite image pictures.

Production completed on schedule Monday 30th November with the final scene where John Leeson, for reasons as yet undisclosed, deviated from the script by choosing to sing "We Wish You a Merry Christmas" in his best K9 tones in place of Terence Dudley's recommended "While Shepherds Watch their Flocks by Night".

**SPECIAL SOUND:** With few science-fiction Radiophonic noises to create other than various bleeps for K9 (even the blaster and probe sounds were from stock held at the Workshop) there was little for Dick Mills to do on this show other than time the K9 sounds specifically to the action.

Mills was not involved in dubbing on the "natural" sound effects, which were the responsibility of the Grams Department during the editing stages.

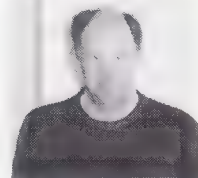
Stock sound played a big role in this production with some level of "atmospherics" accompanying virtually every scene where there was no music. Rooks are heard cawing beyond the windows of the manor, street background noises accompany Brendan while he is in the phone box talking to Sarah, there is a "Night Wind" underscoring a lot of the nocturnal filmed scenes, the cauldron's fire burns louder than any natural counterpart, Jasper growls to order, and even the windows of the out-of-vision greenhouse shatter with a series of



Continued on page 14



In the second part of this interview, director **JOHN BLACK** tells **PHILIP NEWMAN** how he coped with his 'primitive' star...



# Black Magic

I WAS AWARE that the idea for **K•9 and Company** had been bubbling away in John Nathan-Turner's mind for some time — I am sure he told me that he was thinking about it — and then, a bit later, he asked me to direct it. He did explain right from the beginning that it was his hope and intention to get agreement to have it as a Christmas special, but that he had, as it were, a hidden agenda which was to turn it into a series. He thought that if it went down well at Christmas, then that would be its fate. Unfortunately, it didn't turn out that way. But, of course, it only requires somebody in the 'higher levels' to say "You can't have **Doctor Who** and that" and "Whack!", it's down before it's up, you know? I'm sure that's what really happened.

I do wonder, though, whether that dog was really likely ever to sustain a series; a mature programme judgement might be that it wouldn't. Also, there was a realisation that if there was going to be a series, then **K•9** would have to become a very much more sophisticated robot. To be fair, I think that that was John's intention, and, of course, only a series could have justified that kind of a spend on it. We didn't have the money or the series, though, so we still had the old **K•9**!

Now, I had not had the advantage of having seen **K•9** 'in action' in earlier **Doctor Whos**, so I have to say it came as a complete surprise when this curious thing was wheeled out for the first time and demonstrated in a not too convincing way. I think somebody had dusted it down and worked on it for a couple of days to get it going, and I was duly shown what it could — or, more to the point, what it

couldn't — do! It struck me that as being eminently impractical in terms of being able to perform accurately, and I quickly realised that it could be a lot of trouble. I thought maybe that famous adage of not working with children and animals should be extended to **K•9**! It was a very unsophisticated piece of equipment; apart from twirling its ears, there was not a lot that it could do! I mean, it didn't like rough

much as he could to make the whole process as easy as possible. I think he was the best thing about **K•9**!

The programme was filmed in the Cotswolds. I had done other things in that area before, in terms of hunting for locations and so on, so I already had a basic knowledge of the layout of the land. We found the outside of a country house with greenhouses, the road for the stunt effect,

costs doubled, when you got to one o'clock they trebled and so on. So, there were some tense moments when we didn't get quite all the shots that, in an ideal world, I would have liked. Looking back at it, as I did some time afterwards, I felt that those coven shots worked well and the lack of the missing shots was not particularly noticeable. It was quite a difficult sequence to co-ordinate, with all the bangs

and flashes and so on. I can't remember what time of year it was, but it was getting very chilly at night. We were very concerned about Ian Sears, because he got bloody cold in that small white tunic. But there were always good people from make-up and costume who were looking after the welfare of Ian and others.

Actually, I thought the coven stuff was a very nice feature of that particular script. In some ways, it was the icing on the cake to have those nice dra-

matic scenes out in the open with the coven of witches; it added a lot, and was, of course, quite central and germane to the story. I thought it was a good script — all the elements were nicely woven in — and it did present this opportunity of doing these rather rich and exotic scenes which I liked very much. In fact, I think that, as a script and as a dramatic piece, **K•9 and Company** has more shape to it than the two **Doctor Whos** I did. It has more of a story running through it and is more credible. So, to that extent, it's my favourite of the three. I think it stands up quite well.



ground, it didn't like gradients — it didn't like quite a lot of things! — and we required it outside, putting it in cars and things like that. We certainly had problems, because it just wasn't designed to move on gravel or grass. It was a very bizarre thing!

Also, I think it was very difficult for actors to act seriously with this strange and primitively robotic dog, you know. I do seem to recall that John did have to talk Elisabeth Sladen into taking on the part of Sarah-Jane again, but she was very game, I thought. I remember John Leeson was extremely helpful and put himself out as

the churchyard and that sort of thing without too much trouble.

I do recall that we were hard pressed for time — though there's nothing very new about that! — because we were trying to do a lot of things, some of them tricky, like near accidents with cars. Those sort of shots are notorious for running away with time because of all the mucking about putting camera mounts on car bonnets and so on. We were also really really up against the clock on the coven scenes, because they were done on a night shoot. This was in the era when if you got to so many minutes past midnight the



breaking-glass noises first composed for **The Goon Show** in the Fifties.

One clever overlay is the sound of a diesel train revving up and departing 'Chipping Norton' station with an appropriate honk from its horn.

**MUSIC:** The theme music for **K9 and Company** was the first piece of production work done for the show. Aside from his role as John Nathan-Turner's unofficial continuity consultant Ian Levine was also an accomplished independent music producer with many connections in the industry. His offer to compose a theme for the pilot was accepted by the **Doctor Who** Producer, the pair mutually agreeing that what they wanted was an energetic piece in the style of the glossy American series **Dallas**, of which they were both fans.

In partnership with music arranger Fiachra Trench, Levine composed and produced a keyboard version of the theme which they presented to Nathan-Turner on a demo tape, stressing which elements needed to be covered by horns, by strings etc.

The tape was then passed to Radiophonic Workshop Composer Peter Howell who had been engaged to compose all the incidental music for the show. To the surprise of Levine and Trench, the finished arrangement of the theme was not far removed from the demo tape, with no conventional instrumentation whatsoever, purely synthesizers. A voice-over by John Leeson provided the theme's one-word lyric, "K9", and Howell's personal contribution was the "bow-wow" sounds after each "K9".

A single of the theme was rushed into the shops early in the new year on the Solid Gold Records label, although an agreement was later reached with BBC Records in 1983 to market it under their banner in a picture sleeve, backed with Peter Howell's incidental music from **THE LEISURE HIVE**.

Howell's incidental music for **A GIRL'S BEST FRIEND** was primarily produced using Radiophonic Workshop synthesizers, although with some additional guitar passages augmenting several of the action scenes.

Overall the music was a curious blend of 'techno' sounding synthesizer passages for **K9** based scenes, sometimes including bars from the Trench/Levine main theme, and more hollow, haunting underscores keyed to sound like flutes for some of those scenes primed to suggest the presence of things magical.

In a nod to its parent series, Peter Howell included a couple of bars from the main **Doctor Who** theme as an underline to the moment where **K9** mark III reveals he is a gift to Sarah from the Doctor, who would remember her always...

In the script Terence Dudley suggested the use of a passage of music by Schumann as background to the drinks party thrown by the Bakers.

**POST-PRODUCTION:** Even with a ruthless excising of the film schedule and a pruning back of the studio material (including explanations as to why it should be necessary for Sarah-Jane to leave Moreton Harwood in the first place...), there was still over five minutes which had to be chopped from the camera scripted storyline.

Even as editing went ahead the BBC's Graphics Department in London were at work on the title sequence. Bob Cosford was the Designer allocated to the **K9** project. Donated a copy of the Trench/Levine/Howell main theme he set about concocting a title sequence which, given the structure of the Howell arrangement, would need to run one minute, five seconds in length.

Supplementing the location film footage, but constrained by budget, Cosford added four seconds of animated graphics to the rough montage edit. Using standard paste-up and stop-motion animation, he compiled architectural line drawings of **K9**'s snout, ear assembly, back panel and side elevation view as white-line schematics building up onto separate green backgrounds.

The series logo was not too divorced from what would be attempted for the **Doctor Who** titles in the late nineteen-eighties. The word "K9" was culled, in white text, directly from the lettering font on the dog's right-hand side panel. The upwardly sloping word "and" appeared in red joined-up text below and to the right of the "K9". Finally the word "Company" unfurled beneath in green, italic letters before the whole, assembled logo glowed in time to the theme.

**TRANSMISSION:** Throughout most of 1981, John Nathan-Turner had been led to believe **A GIRL'S BEST FRIEND** would air Monday 21st December, during Christmas week itself. Somewhat late in the day he was informed the slot had been moved back by one week to the 28th. By then it was too late to amend all the key dates in the programme which would otherwise have made it so topical.

Its premiere was thus Monday December 28th 1981, right in the middle of a power blackout which affected every television tuned to a BBC show throughout North-west England.

The relatively poor ratings it pulled convinced David Reid (as though he needed convincing...) that a full series of **K9 and Company** was not viable and so the project died a death.

A formal rejection of a series was issued in the spring of 1982, ironically past the point where any vested interest commercial body could act to cancel plans they had made. "World Distributors", publishers of the **Doctor Who** Annual, had already committed to a "K9" annual for 1982, and were decidedly miffed when the series was scrapped. It is not known if they picked up the residual plot ideas mooted for the series and used them for the text-based storylines.

To give the metal pooch a fairer hearing, the BBC did agree to show the pilot again the following Christmas on BBC2, although the ratings did not improve even with all its transmitters working.

**CUTS:** The following is a list of scenes cut from the camera script used throughout production:-

On entering the manor house for the first time, Sarah's first action is to pick up the phone and dial her friend Ann who, the audience is led to understand, works for the same publication as Sarah.

The filmed footage of Sarah's first meeting with Lilly Gregson outside the Post Office (see above).

At the Bakers' drinks party Sarah is introduced to Henry Tobias whom she then proceeds to scold over his decision to print her aunt's letter about witchcraft. Replying that he believed it would amuse some people, he goes on to add:

TOBIAS: Nobody takes that sort of thing seriously any more.

SARAH: They don't?

TOBIAS: No, though I must confess, I very often wonder why not. There's so much evil about you have to look very hard for the good.

SARAH: That's if you believe what you read in the newspapers.

TOBIAS: Touche.

JUNO: Are you earning your drink, Henry?

TOBIAS: Do I ever fail? I hope I've persuaded Miss Smith to contribute to "The Chronicle". A personal column.

SARAH: Gossip.

JUNO: How lovely...

Curiously the passage about never believing what one reads in the newspapers was juggled and added as a post-script pronouncement by Sarah at the very end of the televised story.

P.C Carter is introduced getting out of the panda car after he pulls in to the market garden to respond to Sarah's complaint about the attack on Brendan. As this was Carter's only scene on location, he was dropped from the filming for cost reasons.

A whole film sequence was deleted of Pollock meeting Sarah in the garden shop the morning after Brendan's disappearance. Sarah believes the culprit to be Peter Tracey and announces she is going to the Police. Pollock offers to drive her in his Range Rover. George Tracey watches them both from a distance.

Just before Wilson's confrontation with Tracey in the latter's cottage about the boy's disappearance, there was a short scene of Sarah pacing up and down her sitting room before picking up her coat and leaving to snoop around the Tracey cottage.

Sarah goes to visit Bill Pollock but she finds his den empty. Distraught she then goes for a last anguished meeting with the Bakers.

Again for cost reasons, a film scene of Howard Baker walking in Moreton Harwood towards the Police station was never shot.

**TRIVIA:** At the end of her phone conversation with Brendan in the phone box, Elisabeth Sladen put in the ad-lib, "He got fed up of waiting. Can't wait to meet him..."

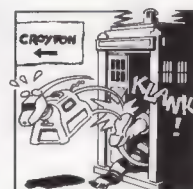
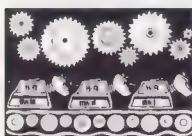
The script references Henry Tobias as the Editor of the "Cotswold Chronicle". Possibly because a similarly named or identical publication exists/existed, the title was changed to "The Standard".

On November 9th Elisabeth Sladen and the dummy **K9** posed for a photo-call for the "London Evening Standard", bedecked with tinsel and funny hats. The photographs were never printed.

Similarly attired in a funny hat, **K9** paid his dues to BBC Birmingham by appearing (with an unseen John Leeson) in the December 23rd edition of the Pebble Mill at One magazine programme, whereupon the dog promoted the pilot's screening on December 28th, plugged the forthcoming single record, and pleaded for a new set of semi-conductors for Christmas.

It was **K9** mark III who later visited the Science Museum with Mat Irvine, as seen on **Saturday Superstore**, where Irvine gave away a perspex replica of the dog built by the museum's workshops to a viewer who could say: "Which story **K9** mark II left in."

**K9 and Company** sees the first (and last) appearance of a home video recorder in **Doctor Who**, sitting next to Lavinia's television.



The 1987 **K9 and Company** novelisation was the last TARGET paperback to go out under a sub-banner heading, **The Companions of Doctor Who**, with a cover by Peter Kelly.



**CONTINUITY:** **K9 and Company** takes place over a clearly defined period. Lavinia leaves for America on Sunday 6th December; Sarah reaches Moreton Harwood on Friday 18th December; and the rest of the episode leads up to the Winter Solstice, on the night following 21st December. The final sequence takes place on Christmas Day itself. Sarah confirms to K9 that the year is 1981.

Lavinia moved to Moreton Harwood almost two years ago; this could (just) be reconciled with Sarah Jane's earlier recollections of living in South Croydon (**THE HAND OF FEAR**) in 1980 (**PYRAMIDS OF MARS**) if Lavinia had moved in early 1980, immediately after Sarah returned to Earth for the final time. This would however mean that K9 mark III was to be found in Sarah's attic throughout the time she knew the Doctor, as K9 last spoke to the Doctor in 1978.

Sarah has been abroad, working for Reuters, and according to the novelisation has just been held incommunicado for a fortnight by Ethiopian rebels convinced that she was there to infiltrate them, not report on a famine. She has worked for a newspaper in the past, but now intends to write a book.

Lavinia's phone number (both onscreen and in the "World Distributors" annual) is Moreton Harwood 778. Sarah's car has the registration OKR 59W, and is an MG Metro. In the novelisation this becomes an MGB, just as Moreton Harwood becomes Hazelbury Abbas, close to Sherborne (where, by coincidence, Mary Wimbush now lives), where Aunt Lavinia lives at Bradleigh Manor. As every other village mentioned in the novel is real, it is possible to follow through the directions K9 gives to Sarah Jane and show that the village of **Bradford Abbas** (on the Dorset/Somerset border) was the real life model for Hazelbury Abbas/Moreton Harwood. No cases of attempted human sacrifice have yet been reported there however...

Brendan is Lavinia's ward and attends Wellington boarding school, where he is taking three extra O Levels — additional maths, physics and biology. That he should be taking physics as an extra subject is curious considering his electronic expertise...

K9 confirms Brendan's suggestion that his components include a tri-sect bus driver, a U-ART (Universal Asynchronous Receiver Transmitter), a self-charging nuclear battery and a holographic memory. K9 has not been programmed to understand Ordnance Survey symbols. Nor does he know the meaning of the word "Chapel".

Sarah has presumably told Howard and June Baker of K9's existence, as she is apparently willing to tell her aunt about him in the Bakers' presence.



# GOBLINS, GODDESSES, AND GREENHOUSES

David Owen decides that *K•9 and Company's* pilot might have helped keep a series in the air, but couldn't hope to get it off the ground...

THE DISCERNING VIEWER, you have to imagine, will have either given up and switched off by the end of the opening credits, or else be glued to the rest of the thing by a perverse desire to see what kind of programme could spawn such a set of clichéd images.

Supported by a signature tune that already sounds like they do when re-arranged for *100 Best BBC Sci-Fi Themes*, *Doctor Who's* first spin-off series heralds itself with the sight of Sarah Jane jogging through the country in fashionable sportswear unsullied by such details as perspiration, driving a brand new hatchback straight from the latest British Leyland advertisement, reading a newspaper (because she's a *journalist*, you know), and, apparently, enjoying a glass of wine outdoors at what looks like 10:30 am. And after all that, who can blame her, poor girl, er, woman...

At first consideration giving *K•9* a series of his own seems like a perfectly sensible thing to do. Over the preceding years, he had become as much a symbol of *Doctor Who* as the scarf and hat, and newspaper cartoonists were latching on to him, as he had not only outstayed the more anthropomorphic friends of the Doctor, but was easier to draw quickly. The publicity in the gutter press over his departure served as a perfect springboard for another venture. The only problem in principle being that *K•9* was a sidekick — like Ernie Wise and Art Garfunkel before him — part of a great team but unproven solo.

Hence the return of Sarah Jane. To followers of *Doctor Who* a much more significant return than that of the leading... ah, beast. Four years previously she had been seen wandering off whistling *Daddy Wouldn't Buy Me a Bow Wow*. On Earth. And so, as this was in the days before time storms and companions creating themselves out of dizzying temporal paradoxes, the action is confined to contemporary England. This would not be a problem, apart from the fact that it's supposed to be about a sentient automaton from the year 5000.

*Be warned: your dog may harbour a secret taste for wine, women, and song, as both K•9 and Company and the BBC Christmas tapes reveal...*



A GIRL'S BEST FRIEND is as traditional as *Doctor Who* had been innovative. It's premise and setting are suspiciously reminiscent of one of *K•9's* more successful outings with the Doctor, too. If Terence Dudley hadn't seen *THE STONES OF BLOOD*, then he sure as hell must have used the same school library as David Fisher. The blood sacrifice by a bunch of yokel masons around a stone circle to a Celtic goddess is even an identical opening. A few seconds later we are introduced to a tough old lady scientist who lectures in the States, in this case Sarah's Aunt Lavinia, but very reminiscent of Professor Amelia Rumford nonetheless.

The stock elements pile up quickly. A gathering at the family rural home at Christmas, a public schoolboy home for the hols, and some suspicious rustics whose rudeness could, or could not, be a mask for much more sinister doings. This has a strange effect. Although sprinkled with contemporary references (chiefly by Brendan), such as O-levels, and some now delightfully quaint 8-bit microprocessor terminology, the setting and cast (and, one has to admit, plot) are so old, that the whole thing takes on an air of being set in the 1950s.

Terence Dudley has a knack for these inconsequential yet charming pieces — the story's mood is echoed in the subsequent *BLACK ORCHID*. This story would have filled a similar role in a possible entire series of *K•9 and Company*, as an interlude between more intense pieces. As it stands it is an entirely inappropriate establishment for the series, and should not, under *any* circumstances, have been used as its pilot. *K•9's* screen time is limited, and his role in the story is almost solely as a provider of information to Sarah and Brendan, the only two protagonists who actually interact with him. Thus, the problem of explaining a talking robot dog who helps solve mysteries to the inhabitants of England in 1951, sorry, 1981, is completely avoided.

The options for a subsequent series are, however, kept open at this point. It could have become *Sarah and Brendan and K•9's Eerie Adventures in Moreton Harwood* where the trio investigate the strange and unusual around the borough. Or, perhaps more interestingly, they could go and cope with terrorists in missile silos, unscrupulous corporations abusing the environment, or malfunctioning weather satellites. Still more interestingly they could address the pressing social problems of mad scientists inventing time machines, peaceful aliens scaring humanity to the brink of war, or dormant evils resting under churches since the dawn of time. But here, they don't.

The presence of *K•9* is utterly incongruous in a story with no other fantastic elements in it *at all*. The goddess Hecate is just a pagan Goddess, and not a trapped entity from another dimension. The druids are just the local constabulary and all the other masons — they are not being conscripted to a more evil end. It's not even a front for a straightforward criminal act — we are even denied the expected *Scooby Denouement*, if references to a more fondly-remembered canine detective might be permitted.

What's left with all these avenues unexplored is a well-made and well-performed Christmas mystery. What it lacks in suspense it makes up for in excellent characterisations. Take Colin Jeavons' George Tracey, for example. From the



very beginning it's shown that he's in on it (whatever 'it' might turn out to be). But that's not the point of his character. It's increasingly apparent that he actually **believes** all this Hecate nonsense, and later genuinely disturbing to see how he has abused his son Peter into subservience over the years. Like his Tim Stamper in *House of Cards* Jeavons' character is driven to extraordinary ends by a long loyalty to a master with impossible needs.

Another way in which *A GIRL'S BEST FRIEND* screams "Don't make a series of this" to the viewer and programme planner alike is by having a much more vivid supporting cast of characters than the leads. Bill Pollock and Juno Baker both have readily apparent life histories about them. The latter is a particularly compelling creation — the maternally voluptuous village socialite who dwarfs her husband in terms of personality and lives for a gossip over a Sobranie Cocktail and glass of Bristol Cream. These are real, filled-out characters. By comparison, Sarah and Brendan are walking mysteries. All we know about Sarah is that she used to knock around in a time machine with an alien called the Doctor and helped a top secret intelligence organisation called UNIT. This is barely alluded to, as it would jar with the homely tone, and so we're left with a woman we barely know. The straw which Dudley has clutched is that **SHE'S A JOURNALIST**, which we are reminded of wherever possible.

The promotion of a previously supporting character to top billing causes a few problems. The old Sarah was always following her nose into trouble and being chastised for it by her mentor, the Doctor. Here, we have a more middle-aged, slightly prickly Sarah, whose motives are a little harder to divine. Her relationship with Brendan is particularly odd. After he has told her in a line loaded with significance by its emphasis that he is taking three extra O-levels, she replies, utterly perplexingly "Watch it boy. Watch it". Why? What are they talking about? Brendan might have been a more successful creation had he been written older or cast younger. Juveniles have usually come across pretty poorly in *Doctor Who*, when they have been included at all. He's a pretty authentic 1980s anaemic public schoolboy, though, complete with designer-cockney accent and a lack of inclination to remove his tie, or open his mouth whilst speaking.

The believability of Brendan and Sarah is stretched a little by their instant acceptance of K•9 (which would have been far more credible with a much younger Brendan). K•9's verbal interaction with others was always far and away his greatest strength on *Doctor Who*, either as straight-man to Tom Baker's Doctor, another Professor Higgins to Leela, or as a toy mascot cum intellectual peer to Romana. Here, he is rather more of the cute gimmicky robot that he is mistakenly remembered as from *Doctor Who*. "Who is the Doctor?" asks Brendan. "Yes" quips the whacky automaton. "Curios-

ity [was] cause of annihilation to feline species", he offers. And later, much more tellingly "Garden goblin not in my memory". He is not used to his strengths here. There are no supercomputers for him to interface with, no corridors for him to creep down. And the absurdity of the series' premise is spoilt by the scenes of Sarah chauffeuring K•9 to his next appointment with mystery **on the passenger seat of her hatchback**. Hmmm. "Sarah Jane Smith was no ordinary journalist. For her partner was a talking mechanical dog. Now read on."

Significantly noticeable is the sexual role-reversal. Women dominate, in another echo of *THE STONES OF BLOOD*. The baddies all worship the female Hecate, Howard Baker looks up to Juno, and the Smiths are solely represented by Lavinia and Sarah. It is the village postmistress who Sarah relies on for information. The dysfunctional family, the Traceys are shown without a mother for Peter. And, it what must have come as a great relief to Elisabeth Sladen, it's Brendan who gets stripped and thrown into a sacrificial robe before being tied to an altar.

The latter is not the only flirtation with a **Tomorrow People**-esque kids' adventure TV style. The fact that Brendan is home for the holidays, and can run rings around all the adults in terms of technical know-how is a staple of kids TV. And just like *The Tomorrow People*, Brendan and Sarah are the arms and legs of a computer with privileged knowledge.

The proceedings draw to a close with a rapid and satisfying momentum: The tension rises, as Sarah begins to suspect that **everyone** around her is in on the conspiracy, and helped by K•9 being an expert on this sort of thing and reminding her that the Winter Solstice is on the 22nd of December, she manages to rescue Brendan in the nick of time, just as the Doctor was always doing for her. Confused followers flee in pandemonium, to spend Christmas behind bars, leaving Sarah behind to finish her book and make a life in Moreton Harwood. The final scene is an in-joke for those privileged enough to have seen the BBC VT engineers' Christmas Tape a few years earlier, in which K•9 gets drunk and sings Christmas carols. Very funny for the tiny percentage of the audience who would appreciate it. For the rest, another reminder that *Doctor Who* is a very silly children's television programme.

*A GIRL'S BEST FRIEND* is not *Doctor Who*. Lacking the multi-layered wit and sophistication of its progenitor it was aimed at a much younger audience. The style is perfect — *Doctor Who* as kids' TV. Unfortunately the content and premise are so full of potential problems that thirteen years on it comes as no surprise that this failed to spawn a series. But its stands as yet more testimony to the complete versatility of the *Doctor Who* format — an attribute more relevant now than ever.



# Five Faces Dog K-9

MONDAY 28th December was classed as a Bank Holiday in 1981 since Boxing Day had fallen on a Saturday. With the greater majority of the British public therefore still at home enjoying the Christmas break, it was not surprising that all television ratings that day scored notably higher figures than they would otherwise for an standard Monday evening.

A GIRL'S BEST FRIEND scored 8.4 million viewers following its 5:45 p.m transmission on BBC1, the highest figure for a **Doctor Who** (related) episode since THE HORNS OF NIMON two years earlier. Although nominally good the figure when seasonally adjusted, by ratings analysts to remove the disproportionate number of additional Bank Holiday viewers, made for a much less impressive total.

Even then the figure was unreliable. Shortly after five o'clock that evening the BBC's Winter Hill transmitter near Bolton had failed, blanking out all BBC signals to the North-west of England as well as parts of North Wales and Southern Scotland. This power black-out lasted throughout the whole of **K-9 and Company**, therefore only those in areas capable of, or willing to, re-tune their televisions to an alternative broadcasting station (e.g. BBC Wales) were able to see it. ITV, network screening a performance from Billy Smart's Circus, was unaffected.

The mixed fortunes of **K-9 and Company** ended on a slightly downbeat note what had otherwise been a vintage year for science-fiction and telefantasy on British television. Imported series like **Battlestar Galactica** and **Buck Rogers** had done well, but for once the market was being led by a surge of home-grown products. At the children's end of the spectrum, **Metal Mickey** returned for two more seasons in 1981, while for adults the year ended with the first run of David

Rudkin's startling play **Artemis 81** which weaved science-fiction and mythology into a tapestry *The Daily Mail* could only describe in its review as "...disturbing, beautiful and almost incomprehensible".

The middle-ground was solidly dominated by the BBC. They had started the year on a high note with the TV version of **The Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy** on BBC2 (quickly followed by a repeat

ITV (LWT region)

MONDAY 28th DECEMBER 1981

|                  |      |               |                 |                         |                      |          |      |          |               |        |       |       |
|------------------|------|---------------|-----------------|-------------------------|----------------------|----------|------|----------|---------------|--------|-------|-------|
| EVEREST N        | E    | BILLY SMART'S | CORON-<br>ATION | film                    | N                    | FREDDIE  |      |          |               |        |       |       |
| IN               | E    | BILLY SMART'S | ST.             | CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE | E                    | STARR    |      |          |               |        |       |       |
| WINTER W         | W    | CHRISTMAS     |                 | THIRD KIND              | W                    | ON THE   |      |          |               |        |       |       |
| S                | S    | CIRCUS        |                 |                         | S                    | ROAD     |      |          |               |        |       |       |
| 5:00             | 5:30 | 6:00          | 6:30            | 7:00                    | 7:30                 | 8:00     | 8:30 | 9:00     | 9:30          | 10:00  | 10:30 | 11:00 |
| BBC 1            |      |               |                 |                         |                      |          |      |          |               |        |       |       |
| S                |      |               |                 |                         |                      |          |      |          |               |        |       |       |
| P                | N    | GRAN          | K-9 AND         | XMAS                    | film                 |          |      | ONLY     | N             |        |       |       |
| O                | E    | -GE           | COMPANY         | TERRY                   | THE BATTLE OF MIDWAY | VAL      |      | FOOLS    | E             | FILMS  |       |       |
| R                | W    | HILL          | Girls Best      | &                       |                      | SINGS    |      | AND      | W             | OF THE |       |       |
| T                | S    |               | Friend          | JUNE                    |                      | BING     |      | HORSES   | S             | YEAR   |       |       |
| 5:00             | 5:30 | 6:00          | 6:30            | 7:00                    | 7:30                 | 8:00     | 8:30 | 9:00     | 9:30          | 10:00  | 10:30 | 11:00 |
| BBC 2            |      |               |                 |                         |                      |          |      |          |               |        |       |       |
|                  |      |               |                 | P                       |                      |          |      |          |               |        |       |       |
|                  |      |               |                 | A                       |                      |          |      |          |               |        |       |       |
| film contd.      |      |               |                 | II                      | FROM MAGNA           | SCOOP OF |      |          | film          |        |       |       |
| THE GREAT CARUSO |      |               |                 | NN                      | CARTA TO             | THE YEAR |      | GUERNICA | IRMA LA DOUCE |        |       |       |
|                  |      |               |                 | TG                      | MICROCHIPS           | (quiz)   |      |          |               |        |       |       |

on BBC1 in July) before unleashing the fourth and final series of **Blake's Seven** in the autumn. The very last episode, **BLAKE**, shown a week before **K-9 and Company**, jammed Television Centre's switchboard as viewers rang in to complain at the horrific nature of the climax where all the cast were (apparently...) killed in a blaze of gunfire.

Sailing in this climate, **Doctor Who** was never far from the lime-light either in 1981, despite the lack of a new series in the autumn. Determined to keep the series in the public eye Producer John Nathan-Turner successfully bid to mount the biggest and most ambitious season of repeats the programme's eighteen year history had ever seen.

Up until 1981 Producers had always been encouraged to keep their repeats "in Doctor", i.e. if Jon Pertwee was playing

was a restriction of just 26 hours per channel in the number of "out of time" programmes the union would permit — arguing that any more would reduce windows for new programming, which in turn would mean less work for their actors and actresses.

FULL CIRCLE and THE KEEPER OF TRAKEN were both rescreened, one episode per night, over two consecutive weeks in August on BBC1, the former generally pulling better viewing figures for its repeat than it had garnered first time around. These repeats were "within time" and so cost nothing in the way of renegotiation. Nathan-Turner's big break was a decision by BBC2's programme planning bodies to allocate over six hours of their available out-of-time broadcasting to the **Doctor Who** office.

The result was **The Five Faces of**

**Doctor Who** was added as well, neatly timed so that its first episode went out actually on the anniversary date of November 23rd. Co-incidentally its scheduled start time of 5:40 p.m. was almost to the minute when the episode **AN UNEARTHLY CHILD** finished its debut broadcast in 1963.

The ratings for this season exceeded all expectations. Flagged by special trailers and a promotional feature on **Blue Peter**, the reruns, at their peak (episodes 3 of **CARNIVAL OF MONSTERS** and **LOGOPOLIS**) were pulling in six million viewers — an equivalent to 12 million on BBC1.

Press interest in these reruns was high too. *Radio Times* trailed the start of the season with a feature on John Craven's **Back Page**, while most of the national dailies carried smaller pieces at the start of each story. London's premier listings magazine *Time Out* went one step better; commissioning a full colour artwork cover to front a lengthy inside article about **Doctor Who**, penned by a new freelance writer, Nigel Robinson.

**The Five Faces of Doctor Who** was undoubtedly a high-performance curtain raiser to the new Peter Davison season due to air in January 1982. Quite why it was less effective in promoting **K-9 and Company** is more difficult to explain. **K-9's** profile had been reasonably sustained throughout 1981, not least due to the continuing rising sales and greater public awareness of *Doctor Who Monthly*. The return of Elisabeth Sladen as Sarah-Jane Smith was widely promoted as well. A press call was held on Friday

December 4th to announce the show, with Elisabeth Sladen later going onto Radio 4 to advertise it in the **Today** programme. Even John Leeson managed to sneak in a quick plug during the pre-Christmas edition of **Larry Grayson's Generation Game**.

The option on a series, however, was not taken up. In response to many letters, mostly from fans based in the North-West, the pilot was rerun on December 24th 1982, BBC2 at 5:40 p.m. But the magic that had worked to make **The Five Faces...** such a hit did not work again for Sarah and **K-9**. An audience of just 2.1 million was judged a poor return for a programme broadcast on Christmas Eve.

## Who's Dr Who's favourite Dr Who?

THE countdown for **The Five Faces of Doctor Who** is on. Next Monday BBC 2 re-runs a story featuring each actor who has played the Time Lord.

The season begins with William Hartnell, in the very first story, from November 1963, and runs every evening to Thursday.

Following weeks continue the journey in time and space with four-part backstories to Patrick

Troughton, Jon Pertwee and Tom Baker.

As he's a Time Lord, Dr Who is getting younger every year, the latest to play him is Peter Davison, a mere 30. His new series begins in January. We asked him how he rated his predecessors:

**William Hartnell (1963-66):** "There was something very mysterious about him. He was almost evil in a way, and certainly the most bad-tempered of all the Doctors. He was also the most forgetful, more like an absent-minded professor than the others."

**Patrick Troughton (1966-69):** "Patrick was the muddier. He was always getting into a mess."

Although he always won through in the end, a lot of the time it was more by accident than design."

**Jon Pertwee (1970-74):** "Funny enough, being a comedian, he played the Doctor straighter than any of the other actors. The way he did it was almost like melodrama a lot of the time."

**Tom Baker (1974-81):** "He was the most eccentric. And he was certainly the most bizarre. But the great thing about Tom was his unpredictability. He kept you guessing because you never knew what he was going to do next."

GEOFFREY HOBBS



A Who's Who of Dr Who's: From Left, Hartnell, Troughton, Pertwee, and Baker. Inset, Peter Davison.

the title role, the reruns would always be of Pertwee stories. Partly this was due to copyright restrictions imposed on the corporation. BBC contracts with the actor's union Equity only allowed a three year period for programmes to be arbitrarily rescreened following their first run. After that repeat fees for all the artists (and some of the crew) involved had to be specially negotiated. Even then, there

**Doctor Who**. Running throughout November and into December, it presented one four part adventure each week, Monday through Thursday, encompassing all the eras of the show. Originally only four series were rostered, **AN UNEARTHLY CHILD** (aka 100,000 BC), **THE KROTONS**, **CARNIVAL OF MONSTERS** and **LOGOPOLIS**, but when it became known that **LOGOPOLIS** was not "out of time", **THE THREE DOC-**

## A GIRL'S BEST FRIEND

**Assistant Floor Manager** Sue Hedden  
**Floor Assistant** Di Hughes  
**Designer** Nigel Jones  
**Design Assistant** Bob Farr  
**Properties Buyer** Michael Preece  
**Costume Designer** Ann Arnold  
**Costume Assistant** Sally Pearson  
**Dressers** Tessa Murray, Nick Eastwood  
**Make-up Artist** Susie Bancroft  
**Make-up Assistant** Carole Brady  
**Visual Effects Designer** Mat Irvine  
**Visual Effects Assistants**

**Graphic Designer** Charlie Lummm  
**Film Cameraman** Tony Auger  
**Film Sound Recordist** Bob Cosford  
Michael Williams

**Film Editor** Dave Brinnicombe  
**Studio Lighting** Michael Lomas  
**Technical Manager** Barry Hill  
**Studio Sound** Barry Chatfield  
**Grams Operator** David Hughes  
**Sound Assistant 1** Richard Hetherington  
**Vision Mixer** John Lowe  
**Senior Cameraman** Mark Kershaw  
**Crew** Phil Wilson  
**Scene Crew Supervisor** 4 (Pebble Mill)  
**Video Effects** Alf Mayall  
**Videotape Editor** Nick Moore  
**Theme Music** John Burkil  
Fiachra Trench  
& Ian Levine

**Theme Arrangement & Incidental Music** Peter Howell  
**Special Sound** Dick Mills

**Transmission:** 28th December 1981,  
5.45pm-6.35pm, BBC1.  
Repeated: 24th December 1982,  
5.40pm-6.30pm, BBC2.

**Audience:** 8.4 million  
Repeat (BBC2): 2.1 million

**Filming:** 9th, 12th-17th November 1981

**Recording:** 29th, 30th November 1981  
Studio A, Pebble Mill

**Programme Number:** 50/LDL300A/72/X



**Cast:**  
**George Tracey** Colin Jeavons  
**Henry Tobias** John Quarmby  
**Sergeant [Vince] Wilson** Nigel Gregory  
**Peter Tracey** Sean Chapman  
**Aunt Lavinia** Mary Wimbush  
**Juno Baker** Linda Polan  
**Sarah Jane Smith** Elisabeth Sladen  
**Brendan Richards** Ian Sears  
**Voice of K9** John Leeson  
**Commander Bill Pollock** Bill Fraser  
**Howard Baker** Neville Barber  
**Lilly Gregson** Gillian Martell  
**PC Carter** Stephen Oxley

**Small & non-speaking:**  
**Sarah Jane double** Susie Brown  
**Dog** Bruno  
**Extras** Sue Crosland, Terry Forrester  
(both probably stunt performers),  
Diane Collette, June Simmons, Gay  
Hokkins, Sally Ann Wright, Constance  
Farmer, Sylvia Shore, John Gletorran,  
Adrian Fletcher, Adrian Varcoe,  
Brian Peacock, David de Villiers, Nat  
Pearn, Ann Palmer, Carol Howard,  
Len Thomas, Margaret Piggott,  
Sarah Raybould, Stephen Howe,  
Pam Couch, Francesca Waters, Jon  
Underwood, Barbara Carey, Dave  
Mitty, Michaela Rea, Ricky Williams

**Credits:**  
**K9 copyright** Bob Baker  
& Dave Martin  
**Producer** John Nathan-Turner  
**Script Editors** Antony Root, Eric Seward  
**Writer** Terence Dudley  
**Director** John Black  
**Production Associate** Angela Smith  
**Production Secretary** Jane Judge  
**Production Managers** Robert Gabriel  
Matthew Kuipers  
**Production Assistant** Yvonne Collins

12 THE SUN, Saturday, December 5, 1981

## Who duo line up for thrills

**FORMER** Dr Who girl Liz Sladen is teaming up with the telly time-traveller's famous robot dog K9.

Liz, 32, who played Sarah-Jane, Jon Pertwee's assistant, will feature with the mechanical dog in an Avenger-style action adventure set in the Cotswolds on December 28.

There are no plans for a full K9 series.

But if the show is a success K9 may go on to get his own shows.

TIM EWBANK



LIZ SLADEN  
Adventures with K9

# References

### Books

DUDLEY, Terence: The Companions of Doctor Who — K9 and Company (1987)  
NATHAN-TURNER, John: Dr. Who — The Companions (1986)  
TULLOCH, John & ALVARADO, Manuel: Doctor Who: The Unfolding Text (1983)

### Magazines

*Celestial Toyroom*, 1978 (Jan Vincent-Rudski observes that K9's fans call him 'him', its detractors 'it')  
*Citizen of the Universe*, 1983  
*The Dave Martin Interview*, 1987 (Dave Martin says he was careful not to use K9 as an easy way out of problems)  
*DWB* 46, 1987 (Dave Martin would have vetoed the script given the chance)  
*Doctor Who Monthly* 60, 1981 (K9 and Company preview)  
*Doctor Who Monthly* 62, 1982 (Jeremy Bentham reviews K9 and Company)  
*Doctor Who Magazine* 116, 1986 (John Leeson interview)  
*Doctor Who Magazine Holiday Special* 1992 (K9 and Company archive, comic strip)  
*Fan Aid* 1, 1985 (Justin Richards comments on K9's expository function)  
*Fendahl* 4, 1979  
*Fires Season Fourteen*, 1985 (Lis Sladen comments on possible futures for K9 and Company)  
*Flight Through Eternity* 2, 1986 (David McCambridge notes connections to THE HAND OF FEAR)  
*The Frame* 15, 1990 (Tim Robins views K9 as an answer to Star Wars)  
*Gallifrey Times* 3/6, 1979 (Ian McLachlan compares K9 to *Lost in Space's* Robot)  
*Gallifrey Times* 3/6, 1979 (Martin Wiggins on humour in the series apart from K9)  
*Gallifrey Times* 3/6, 1979 (Linda Williams comments on K9 not being treated as a dog)  
*IN+VISION* 17, 1989 (Sarah Jane Special)  
*IN+VISION* 25, 1990 (Bob Baker on K9)  
*IN+VISION* 28, 1990 (Graham Williams on K9)  
*IN+VISION* 51, 1994 (Tim Robins reviews STATE OF DECAY and comments on K9)  
*Invasion* 4, 1980 (Andrew Smith comments that he was told not to treat K9 as a dog)  
*Mandragora Helix*, 1984 (Gareth Lonnien thinks K9 and Company slow)  
*Oracle* 2/7, 1979 (John Peel is critical of K9)  
*Panopticon News* 6, 1979 (John Peel is critical of K9)  
*Primitime* 11, 1986 (Andrew Pixley thinks K9 and Company juvenile)  
*Second Dimension* 2/1, 1989 (Mark Davis & Philip Hayes note that Juno Baker is named after a Tarot card)  
*Spearhead from Space* 1, 1979 (Alastair Barrow feels K9 is too useful for the Doctor)  
*Star Begotten* 9/10, 1989 (Nick Cooper thinks K9 and Company failed to fulfil its potential)  
*Stock Footage* 3, 1985 (Hoax listing of six proposed episodes of K9 and Company: A Case of Mistaken Identity (Terence Dudley); Best Foot Forward (Flanagan & McCulloch); Dress Sense (Anthony Root); Dinner for 4,000 (Steve Gallagher); Backpack in the USSR (David Fisher); and Star Poll (Andrew Smith))  
*Symbiotic Nuclei* 1, 1985 (Keith Topping analyses K9's plot functions)  
*TARDIS* 2/8, 1977 (Chris Dunk welcomes K9)  
*TARDIS Time Scan* 2, 1986 (John Nathan Turner on K9 and Company)

### Video Tapes

*Myth Makers* 2, 1985 (John Leeson sees K9 as a computer)

### Theatre

*As You Like It*  
*Bedroom Farce*  
*The Chiltern Hundreds*  
*The Crucible*  
*The Lion in Winter*  
*Macbeth*  
*Make the Sheepstealer*  
*The Philanthropist*  
*The Physicists*  
*Saturday, Sunday, Monday*  
*The Story So Far*  
*Twelfth Night*

### Film

*Brazil* (Terry Gilliam, 1985)  
*Silver Dream Racer* (David Wickes, 1980)  
*Tarka the Otter* (1978)

### Television

*Alice in Wonderland* (BBC, 1986)  
*All Creatures Great and Small* (1979-80, 1987-90)  
*'Allo 'Allo* (1984-1992)  
*Artemis '81* (BBC, 1981)  
*The Avengers* (ABC, 1961-69)  
*Battlestar Galactica* (ABC, 1979-80)  
*Beadle's About* (LWT)

### The Bill

(Thames, 1984-...)  
*Blake's 7* (BBC, 1978-1981)  
*Buck Rogers in the 25th Century* (NBC, 1979-81)  
*Children in Need* (BBC, 1985)  
*Coronation Street* (Granada, 1961-...)  
Cross and Blackwell advert  
*Crossroads* (ATV, 1964-88)  
*Dad's Army* (BBC, 1968-77)  
Daily Mail advert  
*Dear Mother, Love Albert* (Thames, 1969)  
*Dempsey and Makepeace* (Golden Eagle, 1984-86)

*Doctor Who* (BBC, 1963-89)  
*Doomwatch* (BBC, 1970-72)  
*Galactica 1980* (ABC, 1980)  
*The Great Egg Race* (BBC, 1979-1985)  
*Gulliver in Lilliput* (BBC, 1982)  
*Hart to Hart* (ABC, 1979-84)  
*The Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (BBC, 1981)  
*House of Cards* (BBC, 1990)  
*It's Your Funeral*  
*Juliet Bravo* (BBC)  
*K9 and Company* (BBC, 1981)  
*Kinrig* (LWT, 1981)  
*Larry Grayson's Generation Game* (BBC)  
*Lost in Space* (CBS, 1965-68)  
*The Main Event* (BBC, 1993)  
*Mastermind* (BBC, 1973-...)  
*Men of the World* (BBC, 1994)  
*Merry-Go-Round* (BBC Schools, 1977)  
*Metal Mickey* (LWT)  
*Minder* (Euston Films, 1978-1985, 1989, 1991-93)  
*Multi Coloured Swap Shop* (BBC, 1976)  
*My World* (ITV schools, 1980)  
*Nationwide* (BBC, 1976)  
*Play for Today: NAME FOR THE DAY* (BBC, 1980)  
*Playhouse: IF ONLY THE TRAINS CAME* (Granada, 1968)  
*Prince Regent* (BBC, 1979)  
*Public Eye* (Thames, 1965-75)  
*Rainbow* (Thames, 1972-89, 1993-...)  
*Saturday Superstore* (BBC, 1983-1986)  
*Scooby Doo*  
*Search Out Science* (BBC, 1990)  
*Send in the Girls* (Granada, 1978)  
*Shadow of the Noose* (BBC, 1989)  
*Some Mothers Do Ave Em* (BBC, 1973-8)  
*Special Branch* (Thames, 1971-74)  
*Stepping Stones* (YTV, 1977-78)  
*The Sweeney* (Euston Films, 1975-78)  
*Take My Wife* (Granada, 1979)  
*The Tomorrow People* (Thames, 1973-79, 92-...)  
*Up Pompeii!* (BBC, 1969-71)  
Vosene advert  
*The Wedding Feast*  
*Z Cars* (BBC, 1962-78)

### Doctor Who

An Unearthly Child  
Black Orchid  
Carnival of Monsters  
Castrovalva  
Earthshock  
Full Circle  
The Hand of Fear  
Horror of Fang Rock  
The Invisible Enemy  
Kinda  
The Krotons  
Logopolis  
Meglos  
Pyramids of Mars  
Sealed Orders (unproduced)  
State of Decay  
The Stones of Blood  
The Three Doctors  
The Time Monster  
The Time Warrior  
The Underwater Menace  
The Visitation  
Warriors' Gate

### Radio

*A Bitter Almond* (BBC Manchester, 1976)  
*The Archers* (BBC Midlands, 1950-...)  
*Exploration Earth* (BBC London, 1976)  
*The Hilton Boy* (BBC Manchester, 1977)  
*Laura and the Angel* (BBC Manchester, 1977)  
*Post Mortem* (BBC Manchester, 1976)  
*Sir Colin's New Clothes* (BBC London, 1994)  
*Today* (BBC)  
*Wogan's World* (BBC London, 1975)

### Record

*Doctor Who and the Pescatons* (Argo, 1976)

### Music

*Daddy Wouldn't Buy Me a Bow Wow*  
*K9 and Company* (Solid Gold, 1982)  
*We Wish You a Merry Christmas*  
*While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night*

